BING

Spring
2017

No. 175

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

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Bing Crosby Enterprises: www.BingCrosby.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326
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All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::

(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins

(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © Copyright ICC 2017.

EDITORIAL

So here we are, well into 2017, 40 years since Bing passed away and we must make a lot of noise in October to ensure that the media remember this. Also, it's 75 years since "White Christmas" was recorded. Several writers seized on this anniversary last Christmas and some of these articles are included in this issue. It did seem that "White Christmas" was not heard quite so much during the holidays and in the UK the Bing 'n' Bowie duet seemed to rival it for the number of plays heard on the radio.

We are delighted that Gary Giddins has completed the second volume of his three-volume Bing Crosby biography: "Bing Crosby, Swinging On a Star, the War Years, 1940-1946," to be published by Little, Brown. It was submitted to the publisher early in January and we await news of the actual publication date. I know I speak for you all when I say "I can't wait!"

We welcome David Lobosco as he takes over "Celluloid Crosby" from Keith Parkinson, and Jeremy Rose has also joined the ranks of our regulars in this issue. Sadly, our obituaries section is overflowing this time. At last there is information about new CDs much to Richard Baker's relief. Our front and back covers have been supplied by Greg Van Beek and the back inside cover has one of the many letters the late Priscilla Koernig received from Bing.

So there's a lot to read and here's Anton with a few well-chosen words.

Malcolm Macfarlane macwilmslo@aol.com

We are at the beginning of 2017, a year that marks the fortieth anniversary of the passing of two giants of American music, who died within just a few months of each other. One of them is, of course, Bing, who, in his own inimitable fashion, died in October 1977 after a round of golf at La Moraleja, a golf club near Madrid, Spain. The other one is Elvis Presley, who passed away in his Memphis mansion (just a couple of hours from where I live, in the beautiful hills of Tennessee) in August of that same year. As Malcolm has already pointed out, we can expect that the media will cover both anniversaries in a very different way. Presley, the pioneer rocker who spent a big part of his career attempting to prove himself as a crooner, will be remembered fondly by friends, family, and all the fans that flock to his estate on a daily basis. Crosby, the pioneer crooner who changed the face of popular music starting in the late 1920s and early '30s, will likely receive much less attention. Therefore, now more than ever, it's up to us, Bing's loyal fans scattered throughout the world, to do our part to remember him and to celebrate his rich legacy, which (let's not forget it) doesn't end with his records, his movies, and his radio shows, but extends to the realms of sports, business, mass media, and in general, to many crucial aspects of the cultural history of the Western world in the twentieth century. In this sense, without a Bing there wouldn't

have been an Elvis, or at least Elvis would have been different, because so would have been American popular music. And in this day and age of social media and the immediacy that it implies, this is something that many tend to overlook.

It is, however, something that some of the great names in popular music don't forget. One example is the new book by Tony Bennett that I have reviewed for this issue, *Just Getting Started*, in which Bennett places Bing among many of the most important names in twentieth-century music, art, and politics, devoting a whole chapter to discussing the impact of Bing's music and persona on Bennett's own work and on popular music at large.

Finally, my main contribution to this new issue of BING is an article on *Holiday in Europe*, which is perhaps one of the best-kept secrets in Bing's catalog of concept albums. This is in part because its only digital reissue was commercialized in Japan in the 1990s, and that disc is not currently easy to find and commands quite hefty prices. I know I am not alone in wishing for an American or European reissue of Bing's continental journey in song, and hopefully now that we are celebrating the fortieth anniversary of his passing, this wish can become a reality. Making more of Bing's music more widely available for new generations of fans is definitely one of the best and most effective ways of keeping his memory and his legacy alive. So, as I said before, now more than ever, let's all take advantage of every opportunity to celebrate Bing in the months ahead!

Anton Garcia-Fernandez antongarciafdez@gmail.com

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

2016 was an especially eventful year for the political classes in the United States and Europe and, as highlighted in our last issue, our esteemed North American Representative Wig Wiggins experienced a trauma that he wishes had never happened.

We did not give full details last time but when Wig was out for his morning walk on October 25th he was subjected to being crushed to the ground by a tipper lorry which discharged its load onto his left leg. Consequently, Wig was hospitalised for some time, had to endure four operations and then a period in a Care Home before being transferred to a Sunrise Senior Living facility where he was able to put weight on his leg again. He is now home again and is slowly getting back to normal.

We are indebted to **Perry Huntoon** and **Scott Payne** for their excellent work in distributing both the winter edition and this edition of BING.

There has been universal praise for Malcolm's decision to stay on as editor and some of the kind comments received are reproduced in the *One Sweet Letter from You* section.

UK members have responded positively to Malcolm's request to pay their dues on time and many have added a gift to help the club finances. We are grateful for this prompt response and for members' generosity.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members with a wish that they will derive much interest and enjoyment from their membership of the club.

UNITED KINGDOM

Alan Bostock (Virginia Water, Surrey), Ron Holder (Norton St Phillip, Bath)

UNITED STATES/CANADA

Details will be covered in the summer issue of the magazine.

DONATIONS

The ICC continues to be very fortunate in having generous benefactors who consistently support the club with their financial contributions and we are delighted to acknowledge further generous donations from: -

UNITED KINGDOM

Paul Hennessey, Frank Startup, Roger W T Addey, Ken Heason, Lew Grassby, Matthew Sprott, Ian Patience, Geoff Robinson, Des Cusack, John Byrd, Barbara Sellers, Arthur Blood, Michael Winspear, John Stiles, Gillian Stenning, Colin Stewart, Mr P D Hawkins, Maurice Heywood, Alfred Perry, Dennis Saville, Gill McKee, Bert Bishop, Tom Wallace, Chris Hitchcock, Michael O'Donoghue, Mervyn J Thomas, Bert Hamblet, Chris Simmonds, Ken Shaw, Michael Haefner, Tom Maher, Doreen Hubbard, Geoff White, Barbara G Holmes, Peter Jeffery.

US/CANADIAN and AUSTRALIAN donations will be acknowledged in BING #176.

Our benefactors help keep the ICC viable and without their support we would have to raise subscriptions to maintain our current level of service to members.

DEATHS

John C. Marshall (Teddington, Middlesex), Donald Bostock (Virginia Water, Surrey), Eileen Goode (Redditch, Worcestershire)

Malcolm has a separate tribute to the indefatigable John Marshall on a following page. Donald Bostock had a long and fulfilled life (92 years) influencing in a very positive way many members of his family and also his friends. Described by a family member as being without conceit but having a quite confident nature he ranged over many topics including magic, puzzles, naval history and he could recite the alphabet backwards

faster than anyone could say it forwards. Donald loved Bing Crosby and was always generous with his support for the club.

Our sincere condolences are extended to the family and friends of John, Donald and Eileen.

BING CROSBY ON CD

This is my usual reminder that the following CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £7.50, Europe £9.50 and the rest of the world £10.50. Members in the US & Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 4, 8, 9 and 10

BING CROSBY in the Hall – Rare Live Recordings from KMH 1937 – 1946

BING CROSBY and the Kraft Music Hall – Rare Original Survivors

THE ROAD TO HONG KONG – SAY ONE FOR ME

BING CROSBY – GOOD AND RARE VOL 3.

HERE'S BING CROSBY - Radio broadcasts 1938-1946

Until summer, my warmest greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton **mdcrampton@gmail.com**

JOHN MARSHALL

John passed away peacefully on November 3 at the age of 85, He may not be too well known to members outside the UK but he was a prodigious worker for Bing. John joined the International Crosby Circle in the mid-1970s and made an immediate impact. A lively personality with an off-beat sense of humour and a writing style that was sometimes confusing. Always full of ideas, he didn't just talk about them - he actively instituted them.

On Saturday, May 7, 1983, John organised a gathering of 216 people, all united in their dedication to Bing, at the prestigious Waldorf Hotel in London. The meeting was arranged by John to celebrate the 80th. anniversary of Bing's birth. Those attending included Bing's former butler Alan Fisher, Ken Twiss (from the Bing Crosby Historical Society), record producer Chris Ellis, Reg Bristo, Les Gaylor, George O'Reilly and entertainer Roy Chappell who sang many of Bing's old favourites. As a relatively new ICC member, I was there too and it was great to meet so many luminaries from the world of Crosbyana. The events were described in BING #68 and also in John Marshall's own magazine of the time, Crosby Chronicles.

John had written to celebrities all over the world in order to get their comments on Bing and he mounted a superb picture display showing the letters and telegrams from Bob Hope, Kathryn Crosby, Alice Faye, Perry Como and so on plus prominent British artists such as Spike Milligan, Stanley Black, Steve Race and Alan Dell. It was great to see so many kind words about Bing.

Subsequently John arranged Crosby meetings at the Rembrandt hotel in London in April 1985 and 1986 when about 80 people attended each time. One of those there was Ian McLay of MCA and John worked with him to produce the excellent LPs "In Demand" and "Give Me the Simple Life" which contained hard-to-find Crosby recordings.

Then on October 17, 1987, John took over the Coopers Arms in Chelsea for another very successful meeting.

Feeling that Bing was being forgotten, John raised money to place a full page tribute in *Variety* magazine on the 10th anniversary of Bing's death in 1987. He kept placing tributes in *Variety* each year until 1995 aided by Arthur Blood's fund raising through the sale of Crosby

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st DECEMBER 2016

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Subscriptions	9046	Production of BING magazine	11428
Donations	2199	Secretarial costs	344
Sales – Books / back issues	75	CDs - costs	1260
Sales – CDs	1762	Editorial costs	10
		Postage – books/back issues	10
		Refunded cheques	9
		ICC web page	91
Bank balance 31/12/2015	11580	Bank balance 31/12/2016	11510
	24662		24662

Note:

1. The accounts are a simple unaudited Income and Expenditure summary. Amounts owing and stocks of books and CDs held are not shown. Funds held on a temporary basis by the various international representatives are not shown either.
2. The club is able to cover its anticipated expenditure in 2017.

Michael Crampton. Secretary/Treasurer

type stamps.

John was into video early and he developed considerable editing skills. Several Crosby videos were issued to raise funds for the Variety appeal as were audio interviews with people such as Alan Fisher. He also sent copies of his holiday videos to 'lucky' friends!

In recent years, John has undertaken considerable research into magazine and newspaper articles about Bing's early career and if you make a Google search on *internet archive creator john c. marshall* this will take you to his work.

We shall certainly miss him!

Malcolm Macfarlane

Going My Way in Warrington

Jason Liddiard reports on the latest get-together.

Saturday 10th December saw our Crosby Christmas clambake here in Warrington in Cheshire in the UK. We stuck to the format that had proved to be a lot of fun at our October gathering, this time with a distinct seasonal flavour.

Back in October we had discussed the idea of naming local ICC branches after a Bing song. Well, we had a rethink and felt that naming branches after one of Bing's 50+ films would be more appropriate. So we chose to call our branch the *Going My Way* branch of the ICC, with regular clambakes to be held here in Warrington.

This multi-Oscar winning film represents the first year that Bing held the #1 box office ratings spot. It also contains a couple of classic Crosby recordings: *Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral*, and *Swinging on a Star* (Oscar winner for best song). I also think that Bing's laid-back, unflappable character portrayal in *Going My Way* mirrors the temperament of our attendees!

Welcome!

We began by welcoming newcomer Keith Richmond, who had taken the trouble to travel all the way from York. As a member attending for the first time Keith received a souvenir cheque, signed by Bing.

News & Reviews

An opportunity to discuss anything new on the Crosby scene, we covered the marvellous book all about the 1930 film *King of Jazz*, my copy having arrived just two weeks prior.

We also discussed some of the recent radio appearances of Bing, notably on the regular BBC Anne Hopper and Clare Teal shows.

Crosby Internet Radio had certainly thrown up some interesting festive treats in December, including the 1964 *Let's Talk to Lucy* radio interview by Lucille Ball. Also of note was the 1976 snippet recording of *White Christmas*, which Ken Barnes had originally intended for insertion in the Crosby Medley on the Palladium album.

A Few of my Favourite Bings!

We invited attendees to select a favourite Bing Christmas recording (no mean feat)! I kicked things off with my own choice 'I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day', Bing's 1956 interpretation of a 19th Century poem by Henry Longfellow, with accompaniment by the Buddy Cole orchestra and Ken Darby singers.

Michael Crampton, attending his second Warrington meeting, chose the first of several versions by Bing of 'Silent Night, Holy Night' from 1935, backed by the Georgie Stoll orchestra and the rich voices of the Crinoline Choir.

Other choices included 'O Holy Night', 'Mele Kalikimaka' and 'The Secret of Christmas':

It's not the things you do at Christmas time
But the Christmas things you do all year through...

The Crosby Quiz

Our quiz had most of us digging deep to find the answer to a dozen Christmas-themed teasers, such as:

Q. What was Bing's last Christmas-themed commercial recording?

Answer: 'Sleigh Ride', 13 September 1977

Q. Who had the distinction of appearing in both the first and last of Bing's Christmas TV specials?

Answer: Ron Moody

Album Choice

Our Christmas album choice was *A Time to be Jolly*, recorded 1970/71, backed by the Les Brown orchestra with Jack Halloran and the Voices of Christmas. All agreed this is a very much underrated Bing album.

At this point we had a refreshment break (with just a little Christmas cheer) and a photo-call opportunity!

Some of the attendees. (l to r) Jason, Geoff Vizard, Keith Richmond, Michael Crampton and Malcolm Macfarlane. Photo by Judith Crampton.

Film/TV Show selection

Thanks to Malcolm Macfarlane, we listened to Bing's last recorded message to the ICC, followed by a slideshow 'tribute' to Michael Crampton to say thanks for having launched the original Crosby get-togethers back in 1966. It was amazing to see how similar both mine and Michael's approaches were, right down to the printed programme schedules!

Finally, we just managed to squeeze in Bing's 1961 Christmas TV show recorded in London. I'm thinking we'll need to increase future meetings by half-an-hour or so, in order to fit everything in!

I'd like to think that others will choose to 'go my way' and start their own local clambakes. If you do, please make sure you let our Editor know…

Jason Liddiard

(Editor: Well done, Jason for starting what hopefully will become a regular and very successful event in the same way that the Leeds meeting became over the years. The next meeting is scheduled for March 25 and we'll have a report in our next issue.)

SPERDVAC

The SPERDVAC acronym stands for The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama Variety And Comedy. The organization is a non-profit educational public benefit corporation.

Our own Perry Huntoon attended the SPERDVAC Old Time Radio Convention in Las Vegas in January. Various radio and TV stars were there too including Tony Dow ("Wally" on *Leave It to Beaver*), Beverly Washburn (*Old Yeller, The Jack Benny Program*) and Paul Petersen ("Jeff Stone" on *The Donna Reed Show*). Beverly does of course have a Crosby connection from *Here Comes the Groom* and Perry was delighted to meet her.

Perry with Beverly Washburn

Perry delivered a wonderful PowerPoint presentation on Bing's radio career starting with that first 1931 coast-to-coast broadcast and running through the ongoing series until the Crosby-Clooney Show in 1960-62. Various airchecks were used to illustrate Bing's radio work including rare items like "I Cried for You" from a Cremo broadcast, "One Night in Monte Carlo" from an early KMH and "Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer" from a Command Performance show. Introducing "Bonne Nuit" which was originally used in *Here Comes the Groom*, Perry gave a nod to Beverly Washburn as she was seated in the front row during his presentation. He had her take a bow after the song was played and she was highly appreciative of the performance.The final song used was "Till We Meet Again" with Rosemary Clooney.

Well done, Perry! Great job!

Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival

The annual Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival celebrating the screen legacy of Spokane's most famous resident, took place on December 3 at the Bing Crosby Theater in Spokane. The film lineup included 1941's *Birth of the Blues*, 1945's *The Bells of St. Mary's* and 1954's *White Christmas.* In addition, the Hot Club of Spokane delivered live renditions of jazz standards from Bing, Mildred Bailey and Al Rinker.

Bing Crosby House

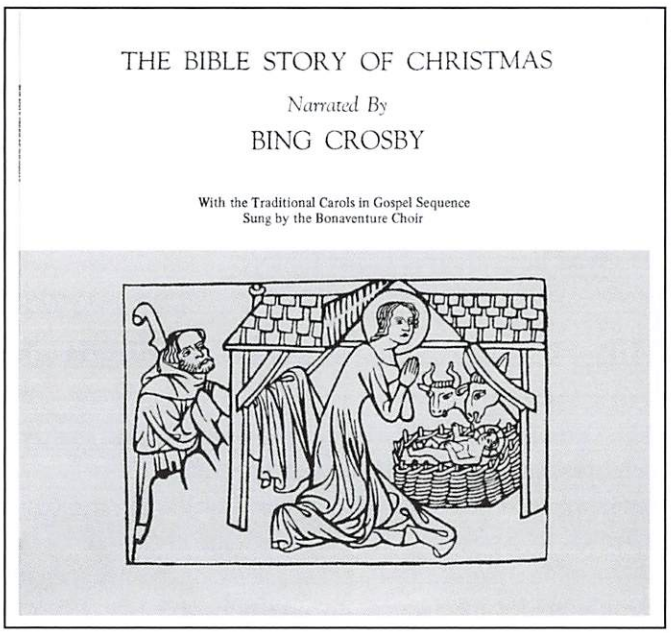
The 3rd annual "White Christmas" Open House at the Crosby House, 508 E. Sharp, was held on Saturday December 10 between noon-3:00pm. Visitors enjoyed the free hot cider and cookies hosted by the Advocates for Bing Crosby. Bing's Christmas carols were played and the house was appropriately decorated with Christmas splendor.

The Bible Story of Christmas

Members may be aware of this LP which is listed on page 72 of the "The Definitive Bing Crosby Discography". Although your editor had an audio copy on i-Tunes I really didn't know very much about it other than Bing narrates the Christmas story from St. Luke, Chapter 2 with a choir singing Christmas hymns which are interspersed with Bing's narration.

In December, we received an email from Larry J. VanMersbergen, Advertising, Promotions, and Social Media Specialist, World Library Publications, the music and liturgy division of J.S. Paluch Company, Inc. They were trying to re-release the album for the 60th anniversary of this recording and were trying to find the copyright papers and ascertain whether they had the

rights to use Bing's narration. The LP was produced by the World Library of Sacred Music and distributed in Cincinnati with the number WLSM5. Mr. VanMersbergen has the master tape of Bing's narration and the music of the choir. (2 tapes). I put them in touch with Robert Bader of Bing Crosby Enterprises and the good news is that this very rare record is being re-released in the summer and we'll give details in due course.


THE BIBLE STORY OF CHRISTMAS
Narrated By
BING CROSBY
With the Traditional Carols in Gospel Sequence
Sung by the Bonaventure Choir

Mr. VanMersbergen told me that the recording dates from 1957 although we had it down as a 1960 release. To confirm the situation, Mr. VanMersbergen sent me a cutting from *The Cincinnati Enquirer* of December 2, 1957 which reads as follows:

Sing with Bing

The Bonaventura Choir, of Cincinnati has recorded a Christmas album with Bing Crosby, which has just reached the local market. Under the label of the Library of Sacred Music, it is an offering quite out of the ordinary. The choir does eight of the most durable Christmas hymns. Interspersed are readings by Crosby of the gospel story of the birth of Christ, as written by St. Mark (*sic – it's St. Luke*).

The Bonaventure Choir is a project of Omer Westendorf, the choirmaster at St. Bonaventure Church, Fairmount. It grew out of the church choir there, and now includes 20 voices—adult and children's. The group has done other recordings and appears quite often on the NBC Catholic Hour. It was through these activities that the Crosby connection was made.

Bing wasn't sure if White Christmas would be hit song

Richard Muirhead kindly sent me a copy of the Christmas Eve edition of the Scottish paper *The Weekly News* as Bing was on the front cover and heavily featured in it. This was the main centre page article by Craig Campbell.

When Bing first sang "White Christmas" exactly 75 years ago, on December 25, 1941 he wasn't sure what the public would make of it. Three-quarters of a century later, it remains the biggest-selling Christmas single of all time, with more than 100 million sales.

Behind the festive message, however, lay a very dark, tragic secret, and Irving Berlin, the genius who wrote it, must have felt sadness rather than joy whenever he heard the song.

The great songwriter, who also gave us "There's No Business Like Show Business" and "Puttin' on the Ritz", wrote "White Christmas" for his baby son, who had died on Christmas Day, 1928, aged just three weeks. It's thought Berlin spent every Christmas Day - he lived to 101 - visiting his lost child's grave.

In 1941, despite his many classic songs, Berlin reckoned this would be his best of all time, but Bing was still a bit nervous as he premiered it, singing on a radio show.

Being the first time the American public had heard it, perhaps Bing's nerves were understandable, but millions took to it in that first listening. Incredibly, the recording of that first version was later erased or misplaced, so we'll never know just good it was.

IT'S THE PAPER WITH THE FEELGOOD FACTOR
THE WEEKLY NEWS
BUMPER FESTIVE ISSUE
What was life like for Britons back in 1916?
We celebrate the best and worst Christmas No 1s
8 pages of great behind-the-scenes festive TV features
75 YEARS OF WHITE CHRISTMAS
10 GREAT SPORTING MOMENTS IN 2016
6 SUPER SHORT STORIES
5 PAGES OF PUZZLE FUN

Bing would record a second version in 1942, which became the song most-requested by US troops overseas, but the master recording was so over-used that it, too, wore out. He had to re-record it in 1947, so there have been three versions.

Berlin had written it for the 1942 movie *Holiday*

Inn, and the success of the single also saw the Academy Awards rules changed. He had agreed to hand out awards, and therefore we had the embarrassing sight of him having to present himself with one for "White Christmas". They've made sure since that such a moment won't happen again.

Many experts reckon the reason the song was so successful in America was because it came out while many GIs were experiencing their first December 25 away from home during the war.

For the vast majority, they'd never been abroad before, and had never been away from their loved ones either, so it's not hard to see why "White Christmas" was so poignant to many.

There would also, of course, come another movie, *White Christmas*, and the 1954 flick is still marvellous to wallow in at this time of the year. Alongside Bing, Danny Kaye and Rosemary Clooney are wonderful, not least because of the wide-screen VistaVision, a trick that the studio engineers came up with especially for the festive film.

The tale of two US Army soldiers, "Somewhere in Europe" on Christmas Eve, 1944, they're saddened their beloved commanding officer is being relieved of his post.

After the war, the pair climb higher in the world of showbiz; eventually booked to perform over the festive break and realising the man in charge of the inn is their commander. Alas, his new line of work is in peril, as there's no sign of Christmas snow and very few guests arriving to stay. The two brothers try to get their whole former company of troops to turn up, and the whole thing is a very feel-good tale of good guys doing the right thing.

Surprisingly, having already done two Irving Berlin musicals with Crosby, Fred Astaire read the script for this one and turned it down flat - and even asked to be released from his contract with Paramount!

In stepped Donald O'Connor, only to see Bing disappear to spend time with his wife Dixie Lee, who was dying. By the time Bing was able to return, Donald had taken ill and was replaced by Danny Kaye.

Danny demanded a large payment and a tenth of the gross profit, and got it, while several supporting actors found the film launched them onto bigger things. .

It seemed anything Christmas-related, with Messrs Berlin and Crosby involved, was destined to be a hit.

If you see it again this year and laugh at the "Dressed up like a dame" routine, you're in good company - Crosby and Kaye just did it for a laugh, and it certainly wasn't in the script.

The cameras were rolling, however, and director Michael Curtiz liked it so much that, once he stopped laughing, he ordered them to keep it.in! That laughter in the background is also real, and several of those around the set have said that the two star men made each other laugh non-stop.

If Bing and Danny were twinkletoes, another dancer in the film showed that he, too, was the sort of guy who would coast to victory on *Strictly* these days.

George Chakiris, who dances with the Haynes sisters, but goes uncredited, danced so well and looked so good on the big screen that he would later earn the part of Bernardo in *West Side Story*. And get himself an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor.

With that VistaVision and Technicolor so in evidence, *White Christmas* is spectacularly colourful and the vivid costumes really grab the eye. But then, thanks to a little-known lady called Edith Head, they were bound to do so!

The Californian was a genius with cinema costumes, clinching an astonishing eight Academy Awards for them in various hit movies. With no official art or design credentials, Edith was simply a good sketch artist who superstars trusted.

Amazingly, as well as the clothes in *White Christmas*, she'd dress everyone from Mae West to Bette Davis, Shirley MacLaine to Jane Fonda, Grace Kelly to Marlene Dietrich. Perhaps she, like all the *White Christmas* stars, was just inspired by Irving Berlin's magnificent music.

All this success, and to think that Bing Crosby hadn't been sure how the world would take to the song!

Craig Campbell

(Editor: Probably a bit of artistic licence in the article but nevertheless it's encouraging to see this coverage. There was another article on that centre page too mainly about Bing 'N' Bowie but space considerations have forced us to omit this.)

Mistletoe & Rhyme

The UK's *The Guardian* newspaper on December 23 had a feature where various singers were asked to name the one Christmas song they couldn't get through the holidays without. Frank Startup spotted the article and noticed that Bing was included and he passed it on to me.

Greg Lake, who sadly died on December 7, chose this.

Bing Crosby - White Christmas (1942)

My father idolised Bing Crosby and tried to teach me all his songs, which was probably my introduction to singing.

At Christmas, Crosby's interpretation of this evergreen classic reigned supreme. It doesn't make any mention of a religious persuasion - only to childhood recollections of the warmth, beauty and charm of the event itself. So when Pete Sinfield and I wrote "I Believe in Father Christmas", it was about how Christmas had deteriorated and was in danger of

becoming yet another victim of crass, corporate financial exploitation. As much as I love everyone having a good time, it's about more than 12 pints of lager and a crate of Baileys. It's more important to make some spiritual, human contact, or visit someone lonely.

We never had any commercial or financial intentions but, of course, now everyone wants to know how it feels to receive all the lovely royalties, which are apparently delivered by wheelbarrow by Santa himself after a long day climbing down everybody's chimneys.

Greg Lake

Kacey Musgraves, who brought a Nashville twist to Yuletide with her recent album, "A Very Kacey Christmas" selected this classic which your Editor's adult children always insist that I play on Christmas Day.

Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters –
Mele Kalikimaka (1950)
I like anything that Bing Crosby does, and one of my favourites is his version of this Hawaiian Christmas song with the Andrews Sisters. He was one of the first people to record the song, but lots of people have done it since and I feel as if it's always been in the background of whatever I've been doing. As has "White Christmas". I have always been inspired by traditional Hawaiian pedal steel and lap steel, and the way it coincides with western swing, which is what I grew up singing. There's a nice world where those two meet, especially in a Christmas way. The title means "Merry Christmas" in Hawaiian. I've no idea how Bing Crosby ended up recording it. He was from Washington.

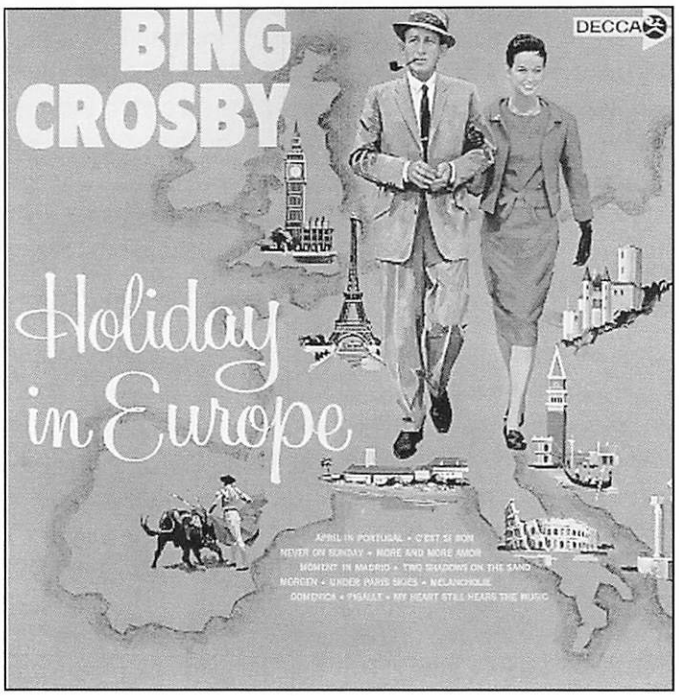
Kacey Musgraves

Holiday in Europe: Bing Crosby's European Journey in Song

Anton Garcia-Fernandez has been listening to one of the rarest Crosby albums.

The 1950s, both before and after the appearance of rock'n'roll on the musical scene, were arguably the age of the concept album. Ushered in by Frank Sinatra's pioneering work for Capitol in tandem with arranger Nelson Riddle, concept albums soon became the standard, and before too long, every self-respecting pop and jazz vocalist, from Julie London to Mel Tormé, was exploring the medium. And, of course, although perhaps he has not been praised for his concept albums as much as The Voice, Bing Crosby contributed several interesting titles to the canon in the '50s and '60s.

There are differences between Sinatra's and Crosby's concept albums, though. Whereas Frank sought to create a certain mood and sustain it throughout LPs such as *In the Wee Small Hours*, *Songs for Young Lovers*, and *Only the Lonely*, Bing's concepts were often thematic. Thus, he explores his Francophile side on *Le Bing*—singing in French, no less!—, pays tribute to favorite performers who introduced tunes he liked on *Songs I Wish I Had Sung the First Time Around*, and takes trips around the world in song with Rosemary Clooney on *Fancy Meeting You Here* and *That Travelin' Two-Beat*. The latter two were possibly inspired by Sinatra's successful collaboration with Billy May on *Come Fly with Me*. Bing stuck to this traveling theme for his 1962 outing *Holiday in Europe*, although on this occasion he was journeying solo and performing twelve songs that were linked by their European theme and by the fact that most of them had been written by European composers or made popular by European singers.



By the time he cut *Holiday in Europe*, Bing had been a freelance recording artist for several years and enjoyed complete artistic control of his projects. For this one, he secured the services of California arranger Bob Thompson, whose space-age lounge arrangements work particularly well here, providing a comfortable background for Crosby's highly relaxed vocals. The idea behind *Holiday in Europe* was clear, as the anonymous liner notes of the album state: "In this, an enchanting musical holiday in Europe, Bing sings a collection of songs from or about some of the places that hold special rank in his memories, and where, we're certain, he's quite well remembered himself." Indeed, from the days of World War II, Bing had held a special spot in his heart for his many European fans, and even though he would feel a lifelong attachment to his British followers in particular, the destination of his trip on this album is actually continental Europe, and not the British Isles.

The journey begins in Portugal, with a spirited reading of "April in Portugal," a classic of Portuguese

fado music originally entitled "Coimbra," about the city of the same name, written by Raul Ferrão and with English lyrics by Jimmy Kennedy. The Portuguese *fado* is a popular genre known for its melancholy air of longing, fate, and despair, with internationally known practitioners such as Amália Rodrigues and Alfredo Marceneiro, and this particular song had charted in the United States for Les Baxter, Freddy Martin, and Vic Damone. Ferrão's beautiful original lyrics, which describe the wonders of the city of Coimbra, were greatly modified in Kennedy's adaptation, and Thompson's chart emphasizes the tango beat that is usually not present in versions by Portuguese singers. As such, it is a fitting opener for a multicultural album like this one.

Next stop is France, with Bing delivering an excellent interpretation of the Yves Montand perennial "C'est Si Bon," written by the French songwriters Henri Betti and André Hornez, with English lyrics by Jerry Seelen. Crosby's love of French pop music is amply evident on this album, since he chose to feature no less than five Francophone songs, including prime examples such as "Under Paris Skies" and "Pigalle." The former was a movie song known in French as "Sous le ciel de Paris," recorded by Édith Piaf, among others, and covered in English by Andy Williams prior to Bing's recording. Thompson's musette-laden arrangement is among the best in the album, and Bing seems inspired by the chart to deliver one of his most easygoing performances. The tempo picks up for "Pigalle," written in 1944 by Georges Ulmer and Géo Kolmer and covered in English by Johnny Desmond before Bing tried his hand at it on this album, convincingly singing the praises of the famous Parisian tourist district. While still on French soil, Bing also sings "Two Shadows on the Sand," an early lyrical effort by Gilbert Bécaud, with a beautiful melody by Maurice Vidalin. Titled "Le mur" ("The Wall") in its original French version, this slow, pensive ballad sounds tailor-made for Crosby's voice. Though at a little faster tempo, Bing sings another rather melancholic song, "Melancolie," by the multitalented Swiss artist Pierre Dudan, which serves as a fitting closer for his European journey.

Traveling through the Old World, Bing also visits Greece courtesy of the title song from the 1960 Jules Dassin-Melina Mercouri film *Never on Sunday*. Composed by Manos Hadjidakis, it charted for Don Costa in an instrumental version, and as soon as Billy Towne added some English lyrics, it was recorded by a long list of artists. Thompson's Greek-sounding chart is very agreeable, and Bing sings the rather dull English lines with as much aplomb as he can muster. Bing's European trek takes him also to Italy, as he features three interesting Italian songs on the album. The first one had been a recent hit for singer Joe Sentieri at the prestigious San Remo Festival in 1960, a foremost venue for the best in Italian pop music at the time. Entitled "Quando vien la sera" ("When Evening Comes"), it was written by Carlo Alberto Rossi and Alberto Testa and adapted into English by Dick Manning as "More and More Amor." This is yet another case of Bing extracting as much mileage as he can out of rather uninspired and predictable lyrics, and Thompson's chart, with its staccato feel, is quite enjoyable overall. Crosby is attempting to remain current with his Italian choices, and the second one is undoubtedly a winner. "Domenica è sempre domenica" ("Sunday Is Always Sunday," though with its original Italian title shortened to just "Domenica" here) was the theme song of the popular Italian television game show *Il Musichiere* and became a phenomenal hit for Mario Riva, the show's host. It seems to have been a favorite of Bing's, who apparently contributed English lyrics to it and delivers a particularly strong performance. The third Italian selection was also a current song—"A Letter to Pinocchio," a children's pop ditty written by Mario Panzeri and originally recorded in 1959 by the popular Italian crooner Johnny Dorelli as "Lettera a Pinocchio." As one can infer from its title, it is a sweet, slow ballad that Bing sings lovingly but whose theme makes it a rather odd choice for this album.

Bing's trip finds him next in Germany, covering the 1959 Ivo Robic hit "Morgen," also known as "One More Sunrise," with lyrics by Noel Sherman, a fair interpretation that closes the first side of the LP. And, of course, no European journey would be complete without a visit to Spain, but in this case, instead of selecting an actual Spanish song, Bob Thompson steps in with his own composition, "Moment in Madrid." Set to tango beat, the only thing that is Spanish about it is the reference to that country's capital city in the title, and Crosby's is one of the few recorded performances of this tune, which jazz vibraphonist Cal Tjader had included in his excellent 1960 live album *Concert on the Campus*.

Bing at work on the album in London.

The instrumental tracks for *Holiday in Europe* were laid down in London by an orchestra led by Malcolm Lockyer (whose name is oddly omitted from the cover), and Bing added his vocals at Radio Recorders in Hollywood over the course of two sessions held on May 8 and 9, 1961. Several months earlier, on October 15, 1960, Crosby had already made an attempt at cutting four tracks ("C'est Si Bon," "Under Paris Skies," "Morgen," and "Melancolie") for this project in London, but he was not fully satisfied with the results, and the versions were not used for the final version of the album.

It can be argued that the fact that Bing had to overdub his vocals on top of previously recorded orchestral tracks may have resulted in a certain loss of freshness and spontaneity, yet the finished product actually makes for some very rewarding listening. Though the LP was originally recorded for Bing's own Project label, it would ultimately be issued under the Decca imprint in 1962, and its reception was rather enthusiastic: *Variety* called it "flavorsome and pleasing" (October 17, 1962), while *Billboard* opined that it was "a pleasant package from Bing" that would make up for "good listening and good programming for the faithful" (October 20, 1962). Crosby himself seemed rather pleased at the success of the record, and in a letter to broadcaster Gord Atkinson, dated December 12, 1962, he discusses its success: "*Holiday in Europe* is also doing quite well. The success that these two albums [the other one is *I Wish You a Merry Christmas*] have met with has been very encouraging to me. It's been a long time since I've had anything that has done as well."

Despite its original success, *Holiday in Europe* was not reissued on CD until 1993, and then only in Japan, in a high-quality edition that is quite hard to come by at the time of this writing and that commands rather high prices on major online retail websites. Since it has never been made available in digital format in Europe or in the United States, it remains one of the hardest-to-find CD reissues in the whole Crosby catalog. More than twenty years after its Japanese re-release, it seems to be high time to make *Holiday in Europe* more widely available to fans of Crosby and popular music in general. The quality of the material it contains certainly makes it deserving of such a treatment.

Anton Garcia-Fernandez

(Editor: Some excellent research by Anton. I'm sure Bing Crosby Enterprises will have this album at the top of their list for a reissue. The abortive London session in October 1960 was of particular interest to us in the UK and a pirate recording of the session was circulated. I played some of it at the Leeds meeting a few years ago. Derek Johnson writing in the New Musical Express gave a flavour of the event.

The first three numbers ("C'est Si Bon," "Under Paris Skies," and "Morgen") were in the can in scarcely no time. In each case, the number was given one brief run-through, followed by three takes on tape, punctuated by such remarks from Bing as: "Let's take it just a whisker slower, Malcolm, huh?" and "Just one more take for luck."

The ease and confidence with which Bing slid into his work was summed up for me by just one incident. He pulled out a new packet of cigarettes from his pocket, tore off the cellophane, extracted one, inserted it in his holder, and lit up—all while he was actually recording "C'est Si Bon."

...Now, it was time to return to the studio to cut the fourth number. This was a tune that Bing didn't know titled "Melancolie". While he was trying it through for the first time, I climbed up into the control box only to come face to face with Bing's greatest fan, Michael Holliday. Mike apparently wasn't able to resist the urge to see Bing at work and, although it meant invading a rival company's premises he had shown up at Decca's West Hampstead studios.

...Not surprisingly, because he hadn't seen the number before, Bing had a shade more trouble in mastering "Melancolie" than with the first three. In fact, when he'd hit the wrong note on three successive occasions, he gave out with a string of colourful epithets which reduced the entire studio to helpless laughter. But this proved a minor handicap, and it wasn't many minutes before "Melancolie" too was satisfactorily recorded.

(Derek Johnson, *New Musical Express*, October 21, 1960)

As Anton says however, these London tracks were not used. Malcolm Lockyer's name was indeed omitted from the LP and I have often wondered if there were problems with the Musicians Union in the USA because the orchestral tracks had been prepared overseas, no doubt more cheaply. The album was finally recorded in May 1961 and not released until October 1962 perhaps indicating that there were problems behind the scenes which resulted in Mr. Lockyer's name disappearing.)

Bing's Doo Wop

Croft O'Toole highlights an unusual kind of radio broadcast.

Fridays from 7 – 10 p.m. EST on 90.1 FM WECS, a very young DJ presents his "Oldies Come to Life" broadcast featuring songs of the 1920s through the 1970s.

Unlike most hosts, Morgan Cunningham plays not only blockbuster hits, but also minor hits, niche artists and lesser known tracks. In one hour it is possible to hear

Bing, The Beatles, Johnny Guarnieri, Ivo Robic, Marvin Rainwater, Mrs. Miller, and an obscure group from Pennsylvania.

Morgan will play any song a listener requests from the 20s-70s if he can locate a copy of the recording. He usually does. I often request Crosby songs i.e. "Put Your Hand in the Hand", "Those Were the Days", "Never on Sunday" from the Crosby albums of the 1960s and '70s as these later great tracks by Bing are seldom played and are mostly unknown even to many of Bing's fans.

Occasionally, Mr. Cunningham will announce an upcoming departure from the usual format. This could be a program of all World War II era hits or the top 100 songs of the 1970s.

Recently he announced plans for a Doo Wop feature suggesting the program would be limited to songs of the Doo Wop era of 1956-1962.

A week before the special Morgan told his listeners he had heard I was going to request a Bing Crosby Doo Wop song for the show.

He had heard right. There were easily several Crosby songs to consider. Morgan's announcement made me determined to find an appropriate Bing song that would be acceptable to Doo Wop fans.

When the Doo Wop special aired, Bing's number was what Mr. Cunningham used to jump start the show. Morgan introduced the Bing Crosby / Mills Brothers collaboration of 1931 on "Dinah" by explaining to the audience the many similarities this recording shared with the Doo Wop of the late 50s.

I would say Doo Wop tends to be slow while Bing's scat usually begins slow but turns to an almost frantic, though still melodic, pace.

Morgan's specials are usually rebroadcast and this one is expected to be perhaps in the late spring or summer of 2017.

Many people under the age of 70 think of Bing Crosby only as a singer of old, slow songs. On the Doo Wop show they will hear Bing swing and sing and fly with the best.

WECS is located in Willimantic, Connecticut. The "Oldies Come to Life" program is streamed at http://wecsradio.com/. Oldies Come to Life and also Morgan Cunningham can be found on Facebook (Morgan Cunningham (Paluti)) or email him at oldiescometolife@gmail.com

Croft O'Toole

(Editor: Many thanks Croft. I would never have thought of "Dinah" as being a suitable choice, so well done, Croft. I have made contact with Oldies Come to Life through Facebook and Morgan played a request ("Both Sides Now") for me in January.

Wikipedia has a definition of Doo Wop as follows.

"Doo-wop is a genre of music that was developed by African-Americans in New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, Baltimore, Newark, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Detroit, Washington DC and Los Angeles in the 1940s, achieving mainstream popularity in the 1950s and early 1960s.

Built upon vocal harmony, doo-wop was one of the most mainstream, pop-oriented R&B styles of the time. Singer Bill Kenny (1914–1978) (of The Ink Spots) is often called the "Godfather of Doo-wop" for his introducing the "top and bottom" format which featured a high tenor singing the lead and a bass singer reciting the lyrics in the middle of the song. Doo-wop features vocal group harmony, nonsense syllables, a simple beat, sometimes little or no instrumentation, and simple music and lyrics.")

Hollywood Victory Caravan

At one of Jason Liddiard's Crosby meetings, he showed your Editor a book by I. Joseph Hyatt titled *Hollywood Victory Caravan*. I thought it might be of interest to members to know about Bing's involvement in this incredible undertaking.

The Hollywood Victory Caravan in 1942 was the greatest public relations piece that the Motion Picture industry had ever produced. It brought together two dozen film stars to raise money for The Army and Navy Relief Society and at the same time encourage the sale of War Bonds. On April 30, 1942, more than twenty of these Hollywood stars were invited to the White House by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt before opening their musical revue extravaganza that during the next two weeks played in twelve cities and netted $700,000 for Army and Navy relief funds. It is estimated that $1.1billion war bonds were sold during the tour.

The "Hollywood Victory Caravan," travelled cross country in a special train, performing songs, dances, skits, playlets, operatic pieces, and spectacular ensemble numbers. The production, emceed by Bob Hope and

Cary Grant, was considered by the *New York Times* to be "the most ambitious money-raising project ever staged by the theatrical world."

Mark Sandrich, the producer and director of Bing's film *Holiday Inn* was the show's producer and Alfred Newman was the musical director. The list of stars in the show was breathtaking: Desi Arnaz, Joan Bennett, Joan Blondell, Charles Boyer, James Cagney, Claudette Colbert, Jerry Colonna, Olivia De Havilland, Cary Grant, Charlotte Greenwood, Bob Hope, Frances Langford, Laurel and Hardy, Bert Lahr, Groucho Marx, Frank McHugh, Ray Middleton, Merle Oberon, Pat O'Brien, Eleanor Powell, Rise Stevens plus various starlets. Special music and lyrics were written for the show by Jerome Kern, Johnny Mercer, Frank Loesser, and Arthur Schwartz

The Caravan's special train had up to fourteen railroad cars which had facilities for rehearsals on board with two portable dance floors, two pianos and ten musicians. The total "on stage" troupe for opening night consisted of 75 people. After an opening show in Washington DC, the caravan moved on to give shows in Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Detroit.

Bing had to finish work at Paramount and host a KMH show before he could join the Caravan and he arrived in Chicago on May 5 for the last seven shows of the tour. In each city, Bing and Bob Hope played a golf match in the morning to raise funds for the war effort and the first one at Edgewater Golf Club, Chicago on May 6 resulted in a win for Bing. An overflow crowd of more than 3,500 resulted in chaotic scenes and the match was terminated after nine holes.

That night Bing took part in the Hollywood Victory Caravan show at the Chicago Stadium before a crowd of 19,823 and $87,761 was taken. The various stars sold kisses at the end of the show until a figure of $90,000 was achieved. With Bing's songs added, the show ran over 4 hours, finishing thirty-five minutes past midnight. Bing's performance made an impact on James Cagney who was to follow him.

Bing and Bob prepare to play their benefit golf match with Tommy Armour and Chick Evans (l to r) at Edgewater Golf Club.

> Bob Hope was doing his stuff and he said, "Well, I know you're waiting to hear the Groaner"—and the place went crazy. Bing walked out to a reception for which the adjective, "triumphant" is inadequate. He stood there in that very humble charming way of his, wearing a brass-buttoned blue coat, rust trousers, brown and white shoes, and a light green shirt that seemed to verify the legend that he's color blind. After the explosion died down, Bing said, "Whadda yez wanna hear?" and they blew up again. Finally he said, "Ya wanna leave it to me?" and they exploded again, until the walls of the stadium nearly buckled. Finally he said, "Hit me Al" and our orchestra leader, Al Newman started his boys off on "Blues in the Night." They had only played the first two bars when the audience went into rapturous applause once again. Bing finished that song, and never in my life have I heard anything like it. I got the traditional goose pimples just standing there, listening. He did another, same thing. And if ever I wanted a demonstration of how it felt to live that old vaudeville phrase "What an act to follow" this was it.
>
> . . .
>
> But I've almost forgotten the point of this story, which is that when Bing came offstage, the perspiration on him was an absolute revelation to me. Here he had been to all appearances perfectly loose and relaxed, but not at all. He was giving everything he had in every note he sang, and the apparent effortlessness was a part of his very hard work.
> (James Cagney, writing in his book, *Cagney*)

The next stop on May 7 was St. Louis (300 miles away) and starting at 2:30 p.m. Bing and Bob Morse (trick shot artist) defeated Bob Hope and Johnny Manion

(host club pro) one up at Meadowbrook Country Club, St. Louis. Hope lost the special challenge match with Bing two and one. The golf had to finish after twelve holes because of the unruly crowd of 2,000. Bob Hope's shot on the eighth hole hit a five-year-old girl in the head but fortunately she was not seriously hurt. That night, Bing and Bob took part in the three-hour Hollywood Victory Caravan show at the Municipal Auditorium and the local paper reviewed it enthusiastically.

> Vaudeville came back last night at Municipal Auditorium, when Hollywood's Victory Caravan presented an evening entertainment for the benefit of the Army and Navy relief funds and the delight of 12,369 St. Louisans who paid $41,040 to attend. It was a glorified version of vaudeville, with more than 20 top-raking Hollywood stars in the leading roles but there was nothing missing except the acrobatic turn. It began to look, along about midnight, as though vaudeville was reluctant to go away again, but the performance came to an end after more than three hours without an intermission in a rousing flag-waving skit in which Jimmy Cagney recalled a George M. Cohan performance.
>
> . . . Hope's old sidekick of the movies, the dulcet-voiced California turf man, Bing Crosby, appeared resplendent in a double-breasted blue coat with brass buttons, topping off some startling slacks which might have been cut from the same bolt as the crimson backdrop of the stage. He and Hope convulsed the audience with their skits on the meetings of rival business men and two politicians who, when they met, got all tangled up rifling each other's pockets.
>
> (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 8, 1942)

With starlets Fay McKenzie and Karin Booth

The 500 mile trip to St. Paul, Minnesota took most of the next day and the train arrived there at 5:00 p.m. where civic dignitaries, 175 drum majors and majorettes, plus a large crowd greeted them on the station concourse. Another exhibition golf match had been set up for the next morning and this time it was Hope who was the victor. The match was restricted to twelve holes because of the need to take part in a matinee show at 2:30 p.m. for the Victory Caravan at the Auditorium, St. Paul. A crowd of 10,000 watched the afternoon performance in the Auditorium which ran for just under its three and a half hour performance time.

> Bing Crosby, who has traveled so many roads with Bob Hope to Zanzibar, to Singapore and other odd points, was in at the close with him. The audience took Crosby to its heart as a favorite prince no matter what he did. I have great admiration for his style in singing a song like "Blues in the Night." He has invented a way of doing this sort of thing that has perfect timing, neatness of touch, theatrical distinction. He has a pleasant urchin way of doing impudent imitations. He looks so innocent, so sleepy and is positively replete with guile.
>
> (James Gray, writing in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, May 10, 1942)

Bing and Claudette Colbert do a bit of clowning at the Nicollet Hotel, Minneapolis.

The troupe then went on to give an evening performance in the Minneapolis Auditorium starting at 8:30 p.m.

> Stars paraded for more than three hours before delighted spectators, displaying a wealth of beauty, talent and special abilities. The whole thing was kept on an informal basis, with Bob Hope, Cary Grant, Bing Crosby and others tossing in frequent ad-libs.
>
> The show took the curse off a lot of previous celebrity personal appearances. Each of the stars showing did something, and Bob Hope's dexterity as master of ceremonies was taxed to keep things from being tied up by encores.
>
> The show was smoothly staged and ably directed, and constituted a field day for admirers of film talent.
>
> The program went something like this: The

chorus of eight starlets opened with a number introducing Hope. Desi Arnaz got a heavy hand with two songs on the Latin order. Groucho Marx and Olivia De Havilland kicked some nonsense around in a domestic skit. Cary Grant appeared in a skit and thereafter spelled Hope at mastering ceremonies.

Joan Blondell did a threatened strip-tease number. Laurel and Hardy went through a skit having to do with Laurel's driver's license. Charlotte Greenwood sang a ditty called "Shall I Be an Old Man's Darling or a Young Man's Slave," and did one of her famed eccentric dance numbers. Claudette Colbert appeared in a kidding match with Hope.

Frances Langford sang a brace of numbers. Arnaz, De Havilland, Frances Gifford and Charles Boyer appeared in a dramatic sketch, and Boyer, who became an American citizen in February, injected a hefty patriotic punch with a brief talk. Ray Middleton sang two numbers, one written especially for the show. Frank McHugh and Fay McKenzie acted in a bedroom farce, with Stan Laurel coming in for the blackout.

Pat O'Brien did a bit from his "Knute Rockne" role. Joan Bennett appeared for her kidding match with Hope. Bert Lahr and Cary Grant appeared in a hilarious income tax sketch, which had Grant laughing so hard he missed lines.

O'Brien spelled Hope and Grant at MC'ing, to introduce Rise Stevens, the Metropolitan singer.

Blondell, De Havilland and Bennett went through a sketch having to do with ladies' war work. Jerry Colonna gagged with Hope, sang and played the trombone. Merle Oberon read a choice bit of verse. Marx appeared with the chorus in a loony "Dr. Hackenbush" song.

O'Brien and McHugh appeared in a brief and effective war sketch. O'Brien did his version of the "America" lyrics. Eleanor Powell dished out plenty of rhythm in a tap number. Lahr convulsed the audience with a song about a woodman.

Crosby kicked some conversation around with Hope and did his spell of caroling. James Cagney did an impression of Cohan's "Yankee Doodle Dandy."

Finale, with everybody on stage again.

Superlatives are weak things in describing a show of this kind. On the score of names alone, it's the biggest thing of its kind ever done, and for entertainment, while there's naturally nothing heavy, it's sure fire. Hope, Grant, O'Brien, et al, kept the thing on an intimate basis despite the fact the audiences were among the largest ever gathered here under a single roof.

Audience response was what the public relations gentlemen describe delicately as "terrific." Had the players yielded to the demand for encores, another three hours might have been spent.
(Robert E. Murphy, *Sunday Tribune and Star Journal*, May 10, 1942)

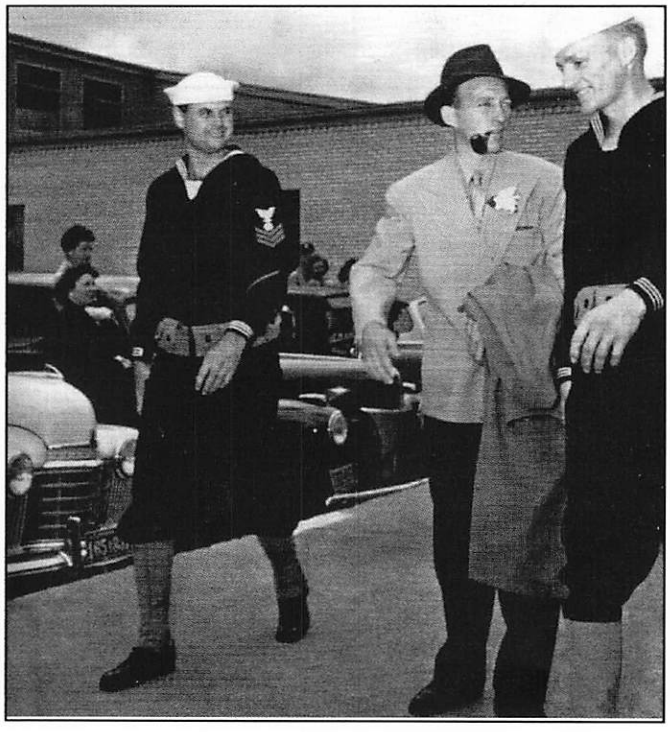
Sunday, May 10 found the Caravan 245 miles away in Des Moines, Iowa. The first full street parade since Boston took place and it was estimated that 200,000 spectators watched the stars journey to the Shrine Auditorium. The matinee show starting at 2:30 p.m. was before a capacity house of 4,300.

Bob Hope opened the show by mis-pronouncing Des Moines. After this error, for which he was forgiven, he told the story about the troupe's visit to the White House. After referring to it as "crowded", he went on to say that First Lady Eleanor flew in for the party, but Franklin was absent, "busy working on a spare tire."

...When introducing Bing Crosby, Hope stated that the man needed many pockets. "Bing doesn't pay an income tax. He just asks the government how much it needs this year. He has so much invested in his country that every time a Douglas bomber flies over his house it curtsies."

...Bing Crosby was singled out for his magenta pants and blue sports coat with brass buttons, as much as he was for his singing. All went as planned and Jimmy Cagney's numbers had the whole audience standing at the end of the show.

Since the travel distance was about 700 miles to their next city, the show ran without intermission and finished just after 6 PM. The stars were taken to the Rock Island Station by bus immediately after the show. It pulled out of the station before 8 PM.
(I. Joseph Hyatt, *Hollywood Victory Caravan*, page 197)



The Victory Caravan train arrived at the Union station in Dallas at 2:45 p.m. on May 11 and was met by large crowds. The stars paraded in open cars to the hotels. As soon as Bing and Merle Oberon get settled in their rooms, they immediately found their golf clubs and went off together to the Brook Hollow club for a quick game.

Commencing at 7:00 p.m. there was a parade by open car around the city on the way to the Fair Park Auditorium where the show started at 8:30 p.m. A girl called Muriel Windham kept a diary and in recent years her daughter has transcribed it on to the Internet. Here's an extract covering the show on May 11 written by the 17-year-old Muriel.

Dear Diary,

And I thought I enjoyed myself Feb. 11!! I have never seen anything to equal what I saw tonight. I expected Bob Hope to look and act rather sick, but he didn't look as if he knew the meaning of the word. The program lasted 3 1/2 hours and I was weak by the time it was half over. Bob was never funnier than he was with Bing Crosby tonight. They first gave an imitation of the presidents of the Pepsi Cola and Coca Cola companies. Bing was Pepsi and Bob was Cokey. They started at opposite ends of the stage, trotted across, met at the center mike, and burped in unison. Next came an imitation of the presidents of the Pepsodent and Ipana companies. Bob said, "You be Ipana. I want to keep my job." The same routine, except they meet in the center, shake hands, and begin gargling. Next it's two Ft. Worth business men. After they shake hands they start digging feverishly in each other's pockets. Next came two farmers. Bob came in scraping his feet, and Bing milked his thumbs instead of shaking hands.

The last and best was the imitation of the presidents of Vitalis Dandruff Remover and Fitch Shampoo companies. While they talked they kept brushing their collars and shaking their coats, then Bob turned around and Bing brushed his coat and Bing turned around and Bob brushed his coat. Bob said, "Got much time?" Bing replied, "Oh, about 60 seconds." Bob said, "Sixty seconds? Well come on!" and they began scrubbing each other's heads. Bing called Bob "Chisel chin" as he left the stage, and Bob yelled, "So long Dumbo! Don't go too fast or you'll take off, with those ears. (By the way, Bing was actually dressed up!)

...When Bob first introduced Bing and started off the stage so Bing could sing, Bing yelled at him and said, "Oh, by the way, Hope, your laundry came back today. They refused it." Bob threw him the dirtiest look I ever saw and walked the rest of the way off the stage

Naturally Bob talked about the California weather. He said, "This Texas weather is grand, but it just can't compare with California weather. The weather out there is so invigorating that the caretakers have to walk around the graveyards all the time saying, "Come on now, fellas, lie down!"

...What a show!

(Muriel Windham's Diary, *Growing up in the Forties*)

The Caravan train set out for Houston at 3:00 a.m. on May 12 and arrived later that morning. Most of the stars remained on the train during the day. Starting at 8:30 p.m., Bing took part in the final show by the Hollywood Victory Caravan at the Sam Houston Coliseum, Houston, before a crowd of 12,000. In all twenty-three screen personalities took part in the three hour show and $65,000 was raised for the relief funds. As Bob Hope was elsewhere broadcasting his radio show, Bing acted as MC until Hope arrived. The local paper commented:

> Most of the evening was frivolous, with Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Pat O'Brien and Cary Grant occupying the spotlight the greater part of the time. Crosby stopped the show with his crooning. "Blues in the Night" called for an encore, and after Crosby sang "Miss You" and "Sweet Leilani" the audience still clamored for more. He could stop their applause only by going into a comedy skit with Bob Hope, giving impressions of captains of industry.
> (*Houston Chronicle*, May 13, 1942)

That was the end of the official tour although some of the stars put on a similar show in San Francisco under the Victory Caravan banner on May 19. Bing left the tour after Houston and went off on a brief detour to Kentucky before returning to Hollywood. He had some recordings to make for Decca including one called "White Christmas"!

In all, the Victory Caravan, during a sixteen city, 10,091 mile (by train) tour, grossed War Bond sales of $1,079,586,819. Bing was interviewed about the tour a few months later and this is what he had to say.

> In addition to accomplishing its purpose, I think that everyone connected with it had a barrel of fun, despite the adversities under which we lived and worked. There wasn't a single squawk about anything or any unpleasantness of any kind. If you could have seen our Hollywood Glamour Girls like Claudette Colbert, Merle Oberon, Joan Bennett and Joan Blondell all jammed together, dressing in the ladies' rooms of auditoriums, doing it cheerfully and laughing and kidding with each other all the time, you'd know what I mean. If any one of them—or any of the male stars either—had been asked to put up with the inconveniences on a picture, for which they were being highly paid, that they endured with a laugh and for nothing on that trip, they'd have walked out of the picture.
>
> I couldn't get away in time to start out with them, but I joined them later and played eight shows—Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City [sic], St. Paul, Minneapolis, Des Moines, Dallas and Houston. I fully expected to find a slipshod, haphazard show that had been hastily flung together, mediocre material, rough edges and a lot of bickering. Instead, I found a show that ran as smoothly as if it were being presented on ball-bearings, every one having fun, everyone with first class material and playing to capacity business in the biggest theatre in town wherever we went. The show ran three hours and forty minutes without an intermission and there were all standees at every show the fire warden would permit.

We traveled and lived on a special train. When we reached a town, a police guard met us, we rode in a parade and then went to the theatre.
(Bing Crosby, as quoted in an interview with Dick Mook which was printed in *Silver Screen* magazine of September 1942.)

Malcolm Macfarlane

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

John Bassett, "Bingville", 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex SS4 1RZ, UK

"Alternate Bing Crosby – Vol. 2". Issued as a companion volume to Colin Pugh's invaluable 1988 publication (still available from the ICC), this 67-page edition continues the story by examining every alternate take discovered since that first edition. In total, 131 titles are dealt with in this A4 size publication, currently available at £7.50 (including postage). All remittances in £ sterling should be made payable to John Bassett and sent to him at the address above.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD. They also have thousands of Public Domain films and TV shows. Films are sold on DVD-R and Mpeg2 video file formats.

Lars Schinnerling, by email from Langen, Germany

For sale: GINNY SIMMS – A discography of all her commercial recordings, movies and known radio appearances (including 20 with Bing Crosby). Illustrated with more than 350 photos from the various stages of her career, newspaper clippings, sheet music, movie posters and lobby cards. 312pp, song index, softbound in A4 format. Price (airmail delivery included): £15 or US$20 via cash or PayPal to lschinnerling@gmx.net (See also Books 'n' Bing)

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: deryk@net2000.com.au)

The Society celebrates its 40th anniversary in August this year. Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights. In December, the film night featured *Holiday Inn* and Bing's Christmas Show from December 14, 1971. *Mississippi* and *Road to Rio* were shown at the February meeting and future film nights are planned for April 18, June 20, August 15, October 17 and December 11. The venue is the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet sites:

BING magazine

This site contains a considerable amount of reference material including Lionel Pairpoint's marvellous radio book, Frans van der Kolff's incredible "Songography", Keith Parkinson's magnificent "The A-Z of Bing's Movies" and your editor's book "Bing Crosby – Day by Day". The Bing Crosby Discography originally created by Richard Baker and now maintained by David Currington is on the site too. All of these are being updated as new information arises. Since the site was redesigned some years ago by Howard Crossland, it has been visited no less than 38,683 times. (The figure was 37,284 four months ago so it's encouraging to see that people are making use of it.)

See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

www.BingCrosby.com

This comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains a mass of information plus some excellent audio and video vaults which contain much rare material. And of course there's Crosby Internet Radio too!

Bing Crosby on Facebook

This also comes under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing's Facebook page is at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Daily entries are made and the number of people who have "liked" the site stands at 273,392.

Bing Crosby House

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby-House/296302530555116

Rare items from Gonzaga's collection are frequently displayed and it's well worth a look. Grace Muljadi, a junior history major at Gonzaga University, manages the page. 581 likes.

Bing Crosby on Twitter

See www.twitter.com/Bingconstantly for this site which has lots of useful tweets and has 7054 followers now.

@Bing_Crosby is still the place to go for Bing Crosby Inc. There are 4303 followers as we go to press.

Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby—"The Old Groaner"—The Bing Crosby Fan Page

Administered by Bud Lehn, this Facebook group now has 479 members. Plenty of entries being posted. Our member Dave Richards often puts up lyrics from Crosby songs and challenges members of the group to name the song. It's one of those things that tests you until you can

remember what the answer is.

Jack Boyle's "Bing for the Seasons - the music of Bing Crosby" has a page on Facebook too. There are 765 likes at present.

The Early Bing Crosby 1926-1936

This Facebook group was created back in 2009 and is administered by Mike Pearl a retired crime reporter living in Georgia. There are 321 members. The group statement is "Before he became overwhelmingly commercial and tried to be too many things for too many people, Bing was truly in a class by himself."

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at:
http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/
Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker. If you have any Bing news please consider making an entry on the site and if there are any Crosby matters you want to discuss, this is an ideal place to do so

Jon Oye's Blog

ICC stalwart Jon has his own first-class blog with several pages about Bing showing many rare items from his collection. Go to: http://derbingle.blogspot.com/

The Bing Crosby News Archive

David Lobosco runs this blog which has news and many stories about Bing at http://bingfan03.blogspot.co.uk/

The Late John Marshall's Compilations

John's excellent 'A Night At The Movies', 'Bing - The Written Word' and 'Footloose Follies' with their many clips of Bing can still be best be found by using Google as your search engine. As in *internet archive creator john c. marshall* (N. B. It won't work with other search engines, it has to be Google.)

Steven Lewis' Bing Crosby Internet Museum

Steven has put up some of the useful reference material he collected when the discussion board was active. See *http://www.stevenlewis.info/crosby/*

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com, website: www.flias.com/)

A magazine called *Laine Lines* is published three times a year.

International Al Jolson Society, c/o Sandra K. Gerloff, 419 Glenwood Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518, USA (website: www.jolson.org - also on Facebook)

A different Jolson radio show can be heard via the web site each week.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, email: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Nat King Cole International Fan Club

We are sorry to report that Roy Holmes who ran this club has died.

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-899771, www.sinatramusicsociety.com/).

A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 003531 8212418).

Meetings now take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month in the Talbot Hotel, Stillorgan, Dublin.

Have you seen

Memory Lane

the acclaimed quarterly magazine for lovers of 1920s, 1930s and 1940s music? Although the emphasis is on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, Memory Lane also covers the American bands, jazz, variety, etc. Al Bowlly - Britain's favourite vocalist is regularly featured.

Memory Lane is quality printed, fully illustrated and nicely presented with articles, CD reviews, Readers Letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A "must" for 78 RPM collectors.

Memory Lane also issues CDs mainly of British dance bands and vocalists, DVDs, runs guided walks in central London identifying the locations where the bands used to play, etc. and hosts nostalgic events in London.

Initial annual subscription only £10 (UK) or £15 (overseas) for readers of BING magazine. (Normal price £15 - UK, £20 - overseas.) Please send cheque payable to "Memory Lane" to

Memory Lane, P O Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England.

Or visit our web site - www.memorylane.org.uk where you can pay on-line.

Books 'n' Bing

1. King of Jazz: Paul Whiteman's Technicolor Revue, by James Layton and David Pierce, published by Media History Press, Hardcover, 304 pages, 306 color & b&w illustrations, ISBN: 978-0-9973801-0-1. Foreword by Michael Feinstein.

The cost is $40, free shipping to U.S. addresses for a limited time (normally $6.00 charged at checkout), plus 6% sales tax for MD residents. Shipments to Canada are $17.00 and shipping to all other addresses outside the U.S. and Canada is $35.00. Please visit the

website for more up-to-date information: http://kingofjazzbook.com/ The book is also available from Amazon.

Jim Kukura posted the following review on the Crosby Fan World site.

"I received my copy of the "King Of Jazz" book and have completed reading it. First of all it has so many great photographs. The book is organized into chapters, short bios if you will, about the major players in the making of *King of Jazz*, such as Paul Whiteman, John Murray Anderson, Carl Laemmle Sr. & Jr. Whiteman's bio is also a bio of his orchestra. You also have the story of the original, unrealized, film as a story line. And then you have the story of the revue which was actually produced. There is a chapter of the film broken down scene by scene, with very short bios of some of the other performers featured in the film.

Finally you have chapters on the critics' and audiences' response to the film, one on foreign versions of the film, one on the rediscovery of the film, and lastly a chapter on the restoration of the film. There are 8 appendices at the end of the book with various statistics on many facts and figures.

The book is printed on very high grade stock and well bound with hard cover. There is also a stunning dust jacket which should be preserved with a protective cover. It would actually make a great presence on a coffee table.

Having been a *King of Jazz* groupie for a couple of decades at least, this book has filled in many questions I have wondered about over the years. Although I first wanted to see the film because of Bing Crosby's participation in it, I really took to all the performances and performers in this unique film. I ardently hope that Universal will release this restored version on DVD soon."

(Editor: I have now received my copy of the book too and I can only echo Jim's comments. It's superb! However, be warned - there's not much about Bing in it. Let's hope a DVD or a Blu-ray disc of the restored film appears soon.)

2. Four Boys and a Guitar: The Story and Music of the Mills Brothers. By Douglas E. Friedman, West Long Branch, NJ: Harmony Songs Publications, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-9713979-4-1. First edition. Various prices although Amazon was offering a paperback edition at $24.90 when we went to press.

ICC member Bill Piccone, of Philadelphia, PA, contributes a review of a recent book about the Mills Brothers that devotes several pages to exploring the relationship between the Millses and Bing.

Probably the most popular and certainly one of the longest-lived American vocal groups was the Mills Brothers, the four sons of John Hutchinson Mills (John Sr.), a well-known barber in Piqua, Ohio, which is the birthplace of his seven children, three girls and four boys. His sons John C. (John Jr.), Herbert B., Harry F., and Donald F. were taught harmony by their parents in childhood, and this included barbershop singing. By the mid-1920s the brothers had begun to sing in public in Piqua. Eventually they went to Cincinnati and made their debut on radio, appearing in as many as twelve programs per week. Finally, in 1931, the Mills Brothers obtained their own program on CBS and began a long series of recordings for Brunswick Records. And the rest, as they say, is history.

During the 1931-34 period, the Millses collaborated often and successfully with Bing Crosby. Their joint recordings—"Shine," "Dinah" (2 takes), and "My Honey's Lovin' Arms" (2 takes)—are favorites of Crosby and Mills Brothers fans.

They also appeared on the *Bing Crosby Entertains* program, sponsored by Woodbury, in 1933-34. Mr. Friedman elaborates in a paragraph: "Few are aware of how active [Crosby] was in the fight for racial equality in the United States. Crosby was one of the first white performers to appear on an equal basis with black performers. His recordings with the Mills Brothers . . . are early examples of his commitment. Also, the brothers were regulars on Crosby's radio show—an important step toward more racial equality on the radio and the music business in general."

Mr. Friedman also quotes an interview with Harry Mills, from the September 8, 1978 *Kingman Daily Miner* (Arizona): "I remember all the sessions with Bing . . . We had our own radio show and Bing had his own radio program, and we were both working together in the Paramount Theater, so between the shows we'd sort of hang out together in the dressing rooms—just harmonizing—and we got the idea of going in and making a record together, that's all. Back in those days, you just sort of helped one another out."

MADE IN ENGLAND
"Magic Notes"
TRADE MARK
Columbia
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B 12992
SPEED 78
D.B. 1971
MY HONEY'S LOVIN' ARMS
(Ruby & Meyer)
SUNG by BING CROSBY and
THE MILLS BROTHERS
With Orchestra
FELDMAN
N.C.B.
COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE CO. LTD.

Strangely, Bing and the Mills Brothers never recorded together for Decca Records, with whom both were associated for more than 20 years, although they did appear on Bing's radio shows from time to time in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Bing paid them tribute on his 1956 Decca LP *Songs I Wish I Had Sung the First Time Around* (available on a recent BCE CD reissue, as well as on Sepia's Through the Years series) with their big hit "Paper Doll," and he worked with Herbert, Harry, and Donald for the last time on his *50th Anniversary Special* on TV, collaborating on "Dinah."

This fine book presents the Mills Brothers' successful career, potted biographies of each of the brothers (including John Jr., the "Forgotten Mills Brother" who died in January 1936), John Sr.'s stepping in to take his son's place until 1956, at which time Herbert, Harry, and Donald carried on as a trio, as well as an overview of prominent events affecting African Americans from 1820 to 2016. A lengthy chronology and discography are included, as well as numerous photos, most of which, regrettably, are blurry though still evocative. The book also has a full index with personal names, song titles, etc. This long-overdue biography will be enthusiastically welcomed by all who appreciate close-harmony singing at its finest. Mr. Friedman and his contributors deserve our congratulations and gratitude.

Bill Piccone

3. Just Getting Started by Tony Bennett with Scott Simon. Harper Collins, New York: 2016. 271 pages. ISBN: 978-0-06-247677-7. Hardcover $13.99.

Anton Garcia-Fernandez takes a look at a new book from Tony Bennett.

One of the foremost American jazz and pop vocalists of the 20th century, with a career spanning several decades and highlighted by dozens of critically acclaimed albums, Tony Bennett is alive, well, and still active in his nineties. And in his new book, *Just Getting Started*, written in tandem with journalist and radio host Scott Simon, he gets the chance to take a look back at his life and career and pay tribute to some names that have influenced him greatly through the years. The 42 chapters that comprise this entertaining, highly readable volume include brief portraits of people that, for one reason or another, made an impression on Bennett, ranging from his mother to historical figures such as Abraham Lincoln to places like San Francisco and Queens to fellow performers, songwriters, actors, politicians, and painters. There are chapters on Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Fred Astaire, Judy Garland, Cary Grant, Bill Evans, Pearl Bailey, Lady Gaga, Fiorello LaGuardia, and Martin Luther King, Jr., among many others, all of them somehow linked by Bennett's admiration and respect for their work and legacy. And, of course, one of the first chapters in the book is devoted to Bing Crosby.

Bennett had already written about Bing in an earlier book, *The Good Life*, a collaboration with jazz critic Will Friedwald published in the late '90s. Back then, Bennett had already stated that Crosby was "the one who showed all of us how to do it" and had praised him for his pioneering use of the microphone. Bennett treads on similar ground in his new appreciation of Bing, emphasizing that Crosby "sang as if he were speaking into the ear of a lover. He made the microphone into an instrument for intimacy." From this chapter the reader may gather how important Bing's jazzy sound was to Bennett's musical education, and Tony also underscores Crosby's prominent role as a film and radio star and mentions his knack for making successful business decisions. In short, Bennett sees Bing for the multimedia star that he was for so many decades.

Moreover, Bennett, who has always been a champion of social and racial equality, is also interested in another side of Crosby that is often overlooked: his role in defense of civil rights. "I wouldn't call Bing a political person," reflects Tony. "But he had convictions." Having rubbed elbows and made records with some of the greatest African American jazz musicians of all time, including his longtime friend Louis Armstrong, Bing always ensured that they were treated fairly and received equal billing. As an example of this, Bennett offers the often-told story about how Bing got Satchmo a role in the 1936 film *Pennies from Heaven*. The tone of the chapter about Crosby is maintained throughout the whole book, which is a highly recommended read for all Bennett fans, as well as for aficionados of jazz and American popular music.

Anton Garcia-Fernandez

4. Ginny Simms – An Illustrated Discography of Records, Radio Programs and Movies. 311 pages, A4 glossy paper.

In our last edition, this book was advertised in *Trading Post* by Lars Schinnerling and one of those who ordered the book was Michael Mccran and he emailed your editor saying:

> *I received the Ginny Simms book advertised in the last Bing and it is so gorgeous. Really a labor of love. I have enclosed my email to the author thanking him. It might be neat to do a small article on the book as she was a contemporary of Bing and they did have some joint appearances.*

Subsequently, Lars sent me a copy of the book and it really is superb. I have congratulated him on a truly wonderful job. The depth of his research is breath-taking and the presentation itself is top class.

John Charles Thomas (left), Ginny Simms and Bing prepare for the Fourth War Loan Drive programme.

Most of you will know that Ginny Simms (May 13, 1913 – April 4, 1994) was an American singer and film actress who was very popular indeed during World War II. She had come to prominence working with Kay Kyser on radio, record and film before going solo in 1941. Ginny played Princess Shalmar in a radio version of *Road to Morocco* with Bing and Bob in 1943, appeared with Bing twice on the Kraft Music Hall and took part in many patriotic broadcasts with him including "Let's All Back the Attack" on January 17, 1944 which began the Fourth War Loan Drive. All of the appearances with Bing are suitably noted.

The book is illustrated throughout with interesting photographs, press cuttings and record labels with separate sections for lobby cards and sheet music. A comprehensive Song Index completes the book with Ginny's songs appearing in bold type.

See *Trading Post* for further information.

Dreaming of a white Christmas?

Frank Startup sent me the following cutting from The Observer newspaper of December 18.

Dreaming of a white Christmas?

Read the question, put your fingers in your ears and close your eyes.

Can you hear "White Christmas" playing?

Of course not, no.

Now you mention it, it's very faint, but I can just make it out.

If you said (b), this may suggest that you're more prone than average to fantasy and even hallucinations. In an experiment conducted at Maastricht University, students were played white noise and asked to press a button when they heard Bing Crosby's classic cutting through the static. Although the song was never played, almost a third pressed the button at least once; these participants scored higher on questionnaire measures of hallucination and, particularly, fantasy.

(Editor: They were obviously Crosby fans!)

'Gentle hearts' inspired song

Jim Willard writing in the Reporter-Herald of Loveland, Colorado on January 5 remembered an old song.

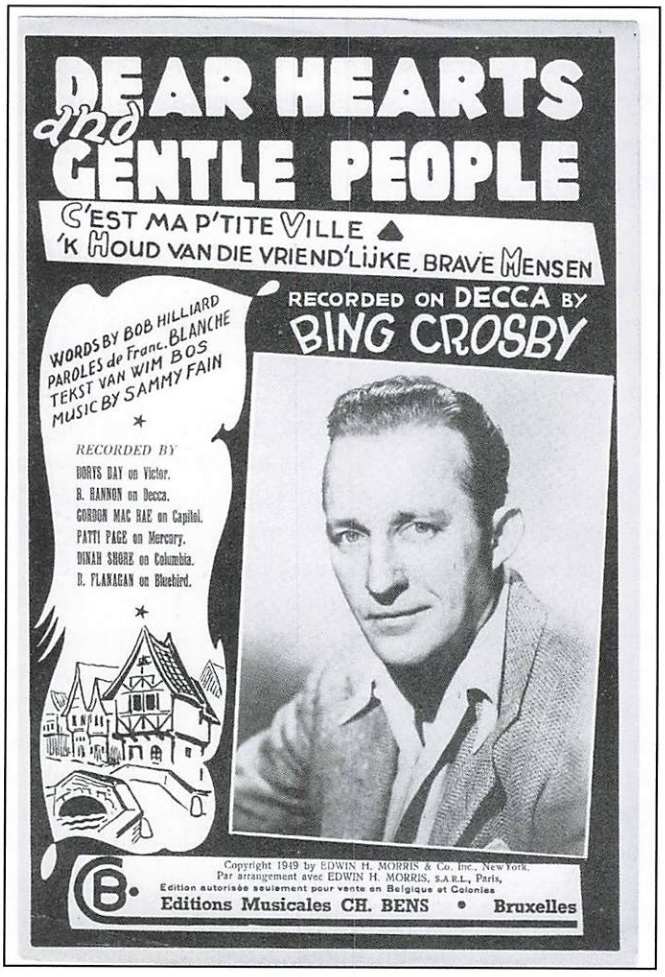
In a prior column I referred to a Bing Crosby hit song from 1950. It was a kinder, gentler time and as such it's worth a peek into the background of the song.

"Dear Hearts and Gentle People" has an unusual story behind it.

In 1884, Stephen Foster died. Sadly, he had become a derelict on the Bowery in New York City. Found in his pocket was a slip of paper on which he had written the words "Dear friends and gentle hearts."

Was it the beginning of a farewell note? Scholars have since speculated that it might have been the title for a song Foster intended to write, but no manuscript for it ever surfaced.

In 1949, Bob Hilliard and Sammy Fain, two of Bing Crosby's favorite writers, discovered the existence of the note. They modified the phrase and created "Dear Hearts and Gentle People."


DEAR HEARTS and GENTLE PEOPLE
C'EST MA P'TITE VILLE
'K HOUD VAN DIE VRIEND'LIJKE, BRAVE MENSEN
WORDS BY BOB HILLIARD
PAROLES de Franc. BLANCHE
TEKST VAN WIM BOS
MUSIC BY SAMMY FAIN
RECORDED ON DECCA BY
BING CROSBY
RECORDED BY
DORIS DAY on Victor.
R. HANNON on Decca.
GORDON MAC RAE on Capitol.
PATTI PAGE on Mercury.
DINAH SHORE on Columbia.
B. FLANAGAN on Bluebird.
Copyright 1949 by EDWIN H. MORRIS & Co. Inc., New York.
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Edition autorisée seulement pour vente en Belgique et Colonies
Editions Musicales CH. BENS • Bruxelles

The Belgian sheet music

With its picket-fence and rambling-rose images, the song reflects a Foster-like longing for hometown simplicity, a time when people were kinder and there was more gentleness in the world. Bing Crosby's version was enhanced by a country and Western arrangement featuring mandolin, guitar and pedal steel.

Bing wasn't the only one to make hay with the song. Dinah Shore, Dennis Day, Gordon MacRae, Benny Strong and Ralph Flanagan all had Top 25 hits with their releases.

Listening to it (as I just was) does make me long for the world that once was.

I wonder now if it even still fits the small town where I knew it. Alas, those days are probably gone forever.

Jim Willard

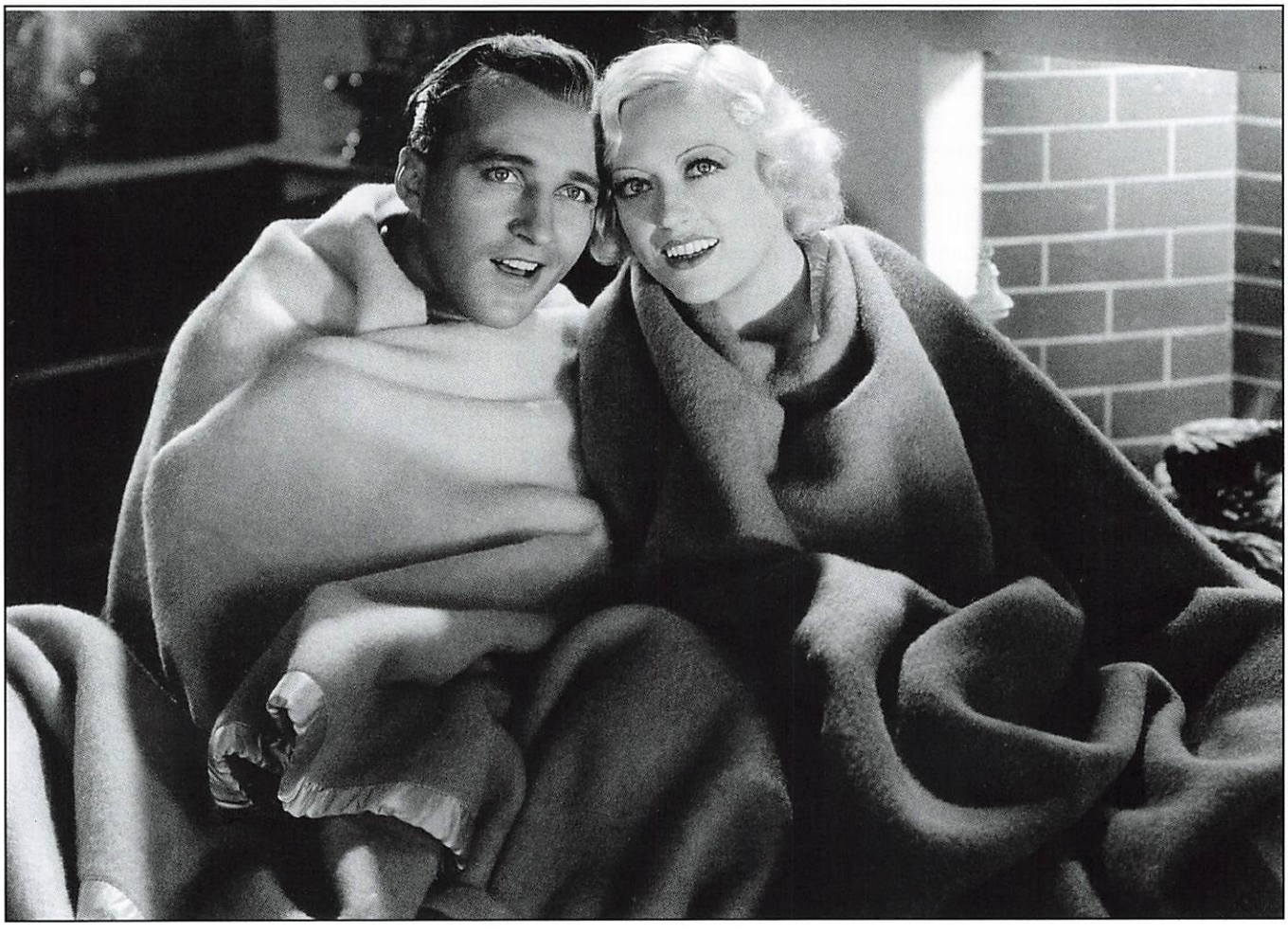
Jim Willard, a Loveland resident since 1967, retired from Hewlett-Packard after 33 years to focus on less trivial things. He calls Twoey, his bichon frisé-Maltese dog, vice president of research for his column.

Celluloid Crosby

It's a pleasure to welcome David Lobosco to his new role examining Bing's film career.

It is a daunting task to follow a legend. Looking back at all of the great articles Keith Parkinson wrote, he was quite a prolific writer. If I write half as well as he did for BING magazine, then I will be happy. Malcolm said I could change the name of the column, but I think in honor of the great work Mr. Parkinson has done for the magazine and the club I will keep the title of the column the same. Great minds must think alike though, because before I got the winter edition of BING, I was prepared to write about my favorite Bing movie *The Country Girl*, but Keith beat me to the punch! Instead I will write about my favorite early Bing film, and the one that cemented Crosby as a leading man – *Going Hollywood*.

Going Hollywood was primarily a starring vehicle for rising crooner Bing Crosby. Bing had become a superstar a year earlier with a popular radio show and



Bing and Marion Davies get warm after being caught in a storm.

his first feature film for Paramount Studios, *The Big Broadcast* (1932). However, the studio was still unsure what to do with their instantly hot product. Was Bing a singer who acted or an actor that could sing? Paramount loaned Bing to MGM, which is something they would really not do much in the future. This film would be Bing's first film for MGM studios, which at the time was the biggest film studio in the world. Bing would not make another film at MGM for 20 years and the only other movies he made for the studio would be: *High Society* (1956), *Man On Fire* (1957), and *That's Entertainment* (1974).

Back to *Going Hollywood*, the film was also a vehicle for actress Marion Davies. Despite a lifelong relationship with paper tycoon William Randolph Hearst, Davies was a star who was becoming more famous for her relationship with Hearst than for her movies. This film did little for Davies' career, but she did look beautiful in the film. Hearst reportedly did not want Crosby for the film as he was not a fan of his singing, but Davies (whom still had co-star approval) fought to get Bing for the film. Rounding out the cast were great supporting stars as Stuart Erwin, Fifi D'Orsay, Ned Sparks, and Patsy Kelly. This movie was the first film for funny lady Patsy Kelly, and she quickly became a second banana favorite in movies.

Hearst gathered the whole cast and crew at his San Simeon estate for a week, where they rehearsed and rubbed shoulders, reportedly with a nonplussed Winston Churchill. During this period Marion Davies asked Walsh if he had ever been to Rockaway Beach as a child, and when he said yes, she dubbed him "Rockaway Raoul", a nickname which stuck for the duration of the production. Bing Crosby even wrote a song called "Rollicking Rockaway Raoul", a biting little ditty about the *Going Hollywood* production. The last lines: "And now that we're through/MGM can go screw/Says Rollickin' Rockaway Raoul", enraged MGM to the point where Walsh says he and Bing were banned from the studio lot. A party recording of the song was released on the bootleg "Both Sides of Bing Crosby", a sought after LP issued in the 1980s.

Co-star Marion Davies was a huge Crosby fan, and she had good things to say about Bing:

> "Bing Crosby was a very fine man to work with. He was always in a very happy mood and he never paid any attention to anybody—he just paid attention to his work. What amazed me was that when he started to sing before the orchestra, he could sing perfectly fine with a pipe or a cigarette in his mouth. He was very cute and very sweet, and he was crazy about his wife Dixie. And she was a darling. Every time he'd be doing a scene, his eyes would be sort of. . . He had big blue eyes and you knew his mind would be way off. I knew where it was. He was wondering where Dixie was and what she was doing. He'd stay by himself and read a newspaper, and then he'd go to the phone and call up Dixie."
> (Marion Davies, writing in her book *The Times We Had—Life with William Randolph Hearst*)

The plot of the movie has Bing basically playing Bing Crosby. He is a crooner going to Hollywood for his first starring role. Fifi D'Orsay is his girlfriend and an uptight French leading lady. When I first saw the movie as a teenager I really hated her, but that is a sign of a good actress. Her role in the film was to make you hate her. Marion Davies basically plays a stalker. She plays a school teacher at an upmarket private girl's school who dreams of a relationship with the crooner. When she quits the school, she hitches a train to Hollywood to meet Crosby. She gets a small role in the film Bing is working on with D'Orsay, and as the relationship between Bing and Fifi disintegrates, the career and love life of Marion Davies looks up as she makes Bing realize that she is the woman of his dreams.

Despite a great opening in Grand Central Station, not much of the "real" Hollywood is used, which is unfortunate. The music is written by the great Nacio Herb Brown and Arthur Freed, and the film shows the debut of the popular torch song "Temptation". The song, which has become a popular torch standard, is my favorite moment from the film. The piece of film work is filmed so beautifully. Set in a dingy night club, Crosby sits with a bright cocktail, his hair ever so slightly mussed. Fifi D'Orsay is seated to his left, Bing starts singing and then there is a jarring cut to D'Orsay in an extreme close-up, staring straight into the camera, bringing a glass to her lips. Then the audience sees some abstract shots of the dance floor, the revelers shuffling like zombies. Other musical highlights include Bing singing "Beautiful Girl" to a young Sterling Holloway (of Winnie the Pooh fame), the bizarre Busby Berkeley-like number "We'll Make Hay While the Sun Shines", and the underrated "Our Big Love Scene". Bing and Marion Davies both looked great in the movie, and the film holds up well more than 73 years after it was made.

The film had its premiere at the Capitol in New York City, and the critics were generally kind to Bing's performance:

> Blended properly with the holiday humors, *Going Hollywood* has enough basic liveliness to produce a sprightly and jocular mood at the Capitol. The overwhelming magnitude of the latter-day musical picture is gratefully absent from this one. It is warm, modest and good-humored. Bing Crosby has a manner and a voice, both pleasant, and the songs that Nacio Brown and Arthur Freed provide have a tinkle and a lilt. From the competent routine sentiments of "Our Big Love Scene" and the pleasing little pastoral lyric "We'll Make Love When It Rains" *(sic)* they range down to that brooding song which Mr. Crosby, loaded with whisky and sorrow, sings across a Mexican bar while the

glamorous Miss Davies is far away.
(*The New York Times*, December 23, 1933)

Pretentious musical with class in every department but one. It has names, girls and good music, but its story is weak from hunger and the script will prevent a big click. Fair is its rating. Marion Davies is starred and Bing Crosby featured, but Crosby will draw the bulk of what this one gets. Other assets are the music, the fact that it's good, and that it has girls and plenty of them... From start to finish Crosby is constantly singing. It must be good singing because it doesn't get tiresome, despite that it's laid on so heavy. . . . At least three songs in the generally excellent score, as played by Lennie Hayton's orchestra, sound promising. With Crosby there to sing 'em the songs get a break, too.
(Variety, December 26, 1933)

The *Going Hollywood* scenario of stars going to Hollywood for fame and fortune is a plot that is still used to this day. Also the storyline about a failing production, an out of touch director (Ned Sparks), a naive producer (Stuart Erwin), and an uptight prima donna (Fifi D'Orsay) is again something that is a part of modern-day Hollywood as well as this vintage 1933 version. After this movie, Bing Crosby was officially a legendary movie star. Paramount would rarely let Bing make movies for other studios after *Going Hollywood*, and they would pair Crosby with some great leading ladies of the day like Carole Lombard and Miriam Hopkins. *Going Hollywood* was not the film to restore Marion Davies shine to her star, but the film ensured that Bing Crosby's star would shine bright for the next twenty years in Hollywood.

David Lobosco dlobosco@verizon.net

Cinerama's Russian Adventure

Martin McQuade first reported on the restoration of this epic documentary narrated by Bing back in BING #154 (Spring 2010) and Richard Baker gave information about the DVD / Blu-ray release in *Keeping Track* in our last issue. David Strohmaier, who has painstakingly restored *Cinerama's Russian Adventure*, has just recently provided Martin with further information about the restoration and this can be found online at https://vimeo.com/187261931

The US premiere of the restored version took place at the Cinerama Dome on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles on December 6 with a compilation *The Best of Cinerama* showing the next day.

Blogger Jan-Christopher Horak picked up the DVD of the Russian film and commented:

"Cinerama's Russian Adventure is certainly the wackiest of the Cinerama films. That film is actually a compilation of scenes from the Soviet version of Cinerama, called Kinopanorama. Invented in 1956-57 by the Soviet inventor Evsei Mikhailovich Goldovskii, the Russian camera was apparently much smaller and more mobile, allowing for some truly amazing footage. The film opens with a troika race in the snow and later we get a reindeer race, both filmed at break-neck speed, but it is the film's mise en scene, moving people and things right up into near close-ups, which differentiates it from the long shot Cinerama films. The camera at times seems to be completely unhinged, as when it is suspended from a circus trapeze or twirling 360 degrees at rapid speeds to follow horses and their riders in a small ring.

...Most surprisingly, the *Russian Adventure* eschews even a single ideological remark. Bing Crosby's folksy narration presents Soviet Russia as virtually identical to the United States only bigger; not one word about Communism or the Cold War, just happy peasants in ethnic dress and the Bolshoi Ballet as a signifier of the country's love for the arts. However, as pure spectacle, the Cinerama films deserve our attention."

Christmas at the movies with Ing and Bing

Scott Marks, writing in the *San Diego Reader* on December 13, took a rather different look at one of Bing's classic movies.

When asked to name a sequel that surpasses its original, *The Godfather, Part II* and *The Bells of St. Mary's* are always the first to come to mind. (*Exorcist II: The Heretic* runs a close third.)

Long before the second installment of the Corleone family trilogy, *Bells* had the distinction of being the first sequel ever nominated for a best picture Oscar. Coincidentally, the title makes a standout cameo appearance splashed across the Radio City Musical Hall marquee in *The Godfather*.

Imagine yourself a contemporary filmmaker hired to tell the story of Father Chuck O'Malley (Casey Affleck in the role originated by Bing Crosby), a showbiz priest assigned a position at an urban parochial school following the former pastor's mental breakdown brought about after spending years "up to his neck in nuns." Once established, Father Chuck falls in love with tubercular nun Sister Mary Benedict (sinful Angelina Jolie subbing for saintly Ingrid Bergman), all the while helping a prostitute's daughter (Miley Cyrus in the Joan Carroll part) get an education.

In addition to earning a compulsory G rating, the final cut has to be sprinkled with a handful of musical numbers including the lovely title tune and Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke's Oscar-nominated standard, "Aren't You Glad You're You?"

In 1945, it would probably have been easier to film the Bible in real time than tell the story of a priest falling in love with a nun. In order for it to end happily in the eyes of the censors, Bergman had to die.

For director Leo McCarey, the success of *The Bells of St. Mary's* seemed preordained. The story had been with him since childhood. His aunt, Sister Mary Benedict, helped build Hollywood's Immaculate Heart Convent and died of typhoid fever. This was to be a follow-up to the director's Paramount smash *Going My Way*. McCarey wrote the story before *Going My Way*, which was originally intended as *Bells'* sequel.

Films about nuns are a tough sell to this yiddishe kop. Who wants to see Audrey Hepburn in *The Nun's Story* when it's made clear by the title that sparkling romance will never enter into it? Only McCarey, an artist who, according to Jean Renoir, understood people better than any Hollywood director, could have slipped this material past the censors.

It should come as no surprise that McCarey, the man credited with teaming Laurel with Hardy, was able to find delicate humor in the most unlikely of places. Father Chuck's arrival at St. Mary's is shown as a calamitous series of sight gags capped off by the original, and funniest, cat-in-the-hat act. Other laughs follow a dog yawning in church and a performance of the nativity story by an all-toddler cast.

Am I actually recommending a film rife with puppy dog and cuddly kitty cutaways, cute kids, and B-b-b-ing Crosby? You bet! I've come around to Crosby and for two hours believe him to be a munificent soul. (That's acting!) In *Going My Way*, Bing is up to his big ears in a vat of sentimental goop almost on par with a visit to *Boys Town*. (*Men of Boys Town* is another sequel that's leaps and bounds ahead of its predecessor, particularly when mined for unintentional howls.)

The Bells of St. Mary's is anything but cloying. It's insightful, heartfelt, and in many ways more uplifting than *It's a Wonderful Life*. It even features Henry Travers, one film prior to gaining winged immortality as Capra's Clarence.

Even though *Going My Way* brought Paramount needed recognition and bushels of cash, they chose not to pop for the sequel. Made under the banner of McCarey's Rainbow Productions Inc., the film was distributed by R.K.O. In 1957, National Telefilm Associates obtained the theatrical rights and for years, all prints bore their logo. The U.S. video rights are controlled by Republic Pictures. Their otherwise immaculate copy not only lacks the introductory R.K.O. tower, but the telecine operator was instructed to obliterate all mention of the studio. They go so far as to graft a gray box over the studio name and copyright date on both the feature and its trailer.

The studio hired a Catholic priest to act in an advisory capacity during the shoot. Ing and Bing couldn't resist having a little fun at his expense. When shooting was completed on their final farewell scene, the stars asked the director if they could do one more take. Just as the two were about to part, they moved in for a passionate goodbye kiss. The frantic offscreen advisor was the first and only priest ever to call "cut!" on a Leo McCarey set.

You'll find even more talk of *Bells* in *Joy to the Screen*, a cover story compendium of Lickona and Marks's favorite holiday movies.

Scott Marks

A Song 32 Years in the Making

Martin McQuade has spotted some unusual Crosby items.

Close to You: Remembering The Carpenters, broadcast on PBS in November, 2016, documents an instance when the singing duo intersected with Bing. During the PBS program, Richard Carpenter stated that their third hit single, "Goodbye to Love" was directly inspired by Bing's 1940 film, *Rhythm On The River*, which he caught on TV while visiting London.

In the movie, composer Oliver Courtney, portrayed by Basil Rathbone, is suffering from a creative block and calls upon ghost writer Bob Summers, played by Bing, for cover. Throughout the film, Courtney cites an elusive magnum opus entitled "Goodbye to Love." Richard Carpenter was intrigued by the title. He recalls, "You never hear it in the movie, they just keep referring to it."

Carpenter then proceeded, at long last, to finally write the melody, with John Bettis contributing the lyrics. Karen Carpenter performed the song on the recording, which spotlights an acclaimed guitar solo by Tony Paluso. "Goodbye to Love" peaked at # 7 on the Billboard charts in July, 1972 and became their second top single in Britain that September.

The Vermont Country Store, a shopping catalog

founded in Vermont in 1947 by Vrest and Mildred Ellen Orton, recently posted on its website (http://www.vermontcountrystore.com/store/company/static/Visit-Us/Customer-Stories) a letter from Bing, dated September 7, 1955, addressed to Mr. Orton.

In the letter, Bing references a spot on the emporium which he had featured on his fifteen minute radio broadcast of July 22, 1955. This is what Bing had to say.

Dear Mr. Orton:

Quite a bit of time has passed since I received your letter of July 28, and I have no legitimate excuse to rely upon to explain the delay, other than that it's summer and I have been up at Hayden Lake, Idaho, just taking it easy, golfing and fishing and laying around, and in that kind of an environment, a fellow's correspondence just falls apart.

I am tremendously pleased that the spot we did on the radio about you and your store up there proved to be of some benefit, and I am serious when I say that I hope someday to come by there and see you. Not this year I don't suppose, because winter will be setting in back there before long, and I've got some work to do too back in Hollywood. That's the trouble with these long vacations -the work piles up. And I've got to get down there and get to knockin' on it and see if I can get some of it out of the way.

It would be nice to go there as your guest and to meet your friends and see the store, and I am making a mental reservation to check with you about it next year.

Certainly there is no necessity for you to send me any of the foods from your Vermont Country Store, but even though it's not necessary, it would be much appreciated. Just send them to me at Elko, Nevada. I am going on down there next week, and the climate there is just about the same as yours I imagine, and when the snow flies I will imagine I am in Vermont eating Vermont products.

All best personal good wishes to you and your family.

As ever -Your friend, Bing Crosby

MartinMcQuade
martinmcquade2002@yahoo.com

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue

Following the receipt of the last magazine a good number of members wrote to Michael Crampton and we reproduce a sample of the many nice letters he received.

Doreen Hubbard, Westcliff On Sea, Essex, UK

Please find enclosed my cheque for our next year's membership. I am sure all the Bing fans join me in thanking you and Malcolm, plus all the other people involved in keeping our lovely BING in our lives.

Sadly, my husband, Freddy, who was diagnosed with vascular dementia during May 2014, has had to go into a local care home. When I, my daughter and grandson went to view the home in advance of Freddy being discharged from Southend Hospital, guess who was singing when we arrived??!! Yes, it was Bing and, when he was also singing when we left, well naturally that sold it to us and he has been in Brooklands since 12th June. And we still make sure they play plenty of Bing.

There is always something so secure and re-assuring when Bing sings. He has always been a big part of my life since I was a little girl and nothing has changed! He still brings me so much comfort.

I always look forward to receiving and reading the BING magazine - long may you continue.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and, please, a peaceful 2017.

Geoff Vizard, Wigan, Lancashire, UK

It's that time of year again, when we pay our subscriptions for another year in this lovely club, which honours the memory of our favourite entertainer and singer Bing Crosby. Time also, to give our thanks to the wonderful people, such as you Michael, who keep this club, and the magazine going with photographs, articles, and stories about Bing, and without which, life would be more tedious.

As I write, I am listening to the Crosby Internet Radio playing Christmas songs, and once again I keep stopping to sing along (you just can't help it can you!), thanks to Malcolm for pointing me to this site…

…Thank you for all the work you do behind the scenes, helping this club to continue.

Bert Hamblet, West Kirby, Wirral, UK

Enclosed is my cheque for the next 12 months, plus a little extra. So glad to see Malcolm has decided to stay on. He does an excellent job with the magazine. If the magazine had folded I would have been really sad.

I was a subscriber to "In Tune" from 1987 till last year when the Editor decided to go On-Line. It was so abrupt. He could have printed a last copy telling us why he had decided to do it.

This is the time of year when people discover Bing with "White Christmas". You would think it was the only song he sang. Most people today think the 1950s

music scene consisted of Doris Day, Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin. Also about this time, TV magazines always come out with the same mistake – *White Christmas* is a remake of *Holiday Inn*!

I remember in 1977 about a month before Bing died, it was announced in the *TV Times* that Mavis Nicholson would interview Bing one afternoon the following week. I told all my friends who were Bing fans about it.

I took the afternoon off to watch it. Mavis Nicholson came on and introduced Elvis Costello! Nothing was said why Bing wasn't appearing. All my friends played hell with me for giving duff information.

Michael Haefner, Eynatten, Belgium

At the end of this year, I'd like to thank you folks very, very much for all the beautiful BING issues you always put together. I'm looking forward to another great year with Der Bingle. I wish you a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2017.

Other letters received include:

Roger E. Schore, New York, New York, USA

I don't believe that it's been brought to anyone's attention in the ICC that in May of last year, the Jazz@Lincoln Center organization in New York presented a program entitled "Body & Soul: America's Unforgettable Crooners." The focus of the evening was to feature the songs of Bing, Nat Cole and Mel Torme. The music director was a very talented drummer Bryan Carter and the three featured singers were Denzal Sinclaire, Benny Barack III and Charles Turner, all young, rising jazz singers. The evening started' on a Crosby note as I rode up in the elevator with Harry Crosby. Here's the set list:

Smack Dab in the Middle – Fascinating Rhythm – A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square – Blue Moon – Straighten Up and Fly Right – Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered – Mountain Greenery – Answer Me, My Love – Orange Colored Sky – To the Ends of the Earth – I'll Never Forget You – Morning Star – I Love You (For Sentimental Reasons) – Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup – Swinging on a Star - Unforgettable

As you can see, more of the songs were associated with Nat Cole than either Crosby or Tormé. And although these are concerts and not lectures, I wish that some perspective had been provided in terms of explaining why each singer was important and what each one had separately contributed to the development of the art of jazz singing. To be fair, there might have been a pre-concert lecture that Jazz@LC usually provides and perhaps that was true in this case. It does seem that one of the purposes of these concerts is to showcase young and upcoming talent and this concert was a perfect example of that.

In September, I was back at Lincoln Center to attend a show featuring the great Dee Dee Bridgewater entitled "Songs We Love." Ms. Bridgewater's musical director was the talented trumpet player Riley Mulherkar. As one of Ms. Bridgewater's selections was "Pennies from Heaven," she said in her introduction that Bing had introduced the song and how she loved his voice. She then sang the opening bars to "White Christmas." As Mr. Mulherkar hails from Seattle, Washington, he mentioned that Bing had been born in nearby Tacoma and called him, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald and Judy Garland among the giants in the world of the American popular song.

I saw "Holiday Inn" on Broadway the following month and enjoyed it. Frankly, I thought its ambitions were modest, to basically provide an evening's entertainment of terrific Berlin songs, sung and danced by a talented cast. In that regard, the show worked for me. Wisely, a wonderful Berlin tune would come along within three or four minutes of one another. And I was delighted to see in the lobby the Crosby-Berlin song book CD being sold!

Also, earlier in the week, the Times on their editorial page saluted and mourned the passing of DJ Rich Conaty whose program "The Big Broadcast" brought the music of the twenties and thirties and the artists of that period into the current century.

Bob Grace, by email from Houston, Texas, USA

I was listening to Pandora (Glenn Miller Orchestra station) a few nights ago when I suddenly heard Bing singing *I'll Be Seeing You*. What was remarkable about this was that it wasn't his Decca recording of the song or even a segment from his *Kraft Music Hall* broadcasts, it was from one of the WWII radio broadcasts he did from London in August 1944. A British radio announcer introduces Bing and he begins singing *I'll Be Seeing You*.

I have a copy of the ICC audio cassette the club put out a few years ago of "Bing in England — August 1944," so I checked my copy. What Pandora played was from a radio broadcast of Bing singing with the British AEF Band on August 30, 1944. Wow! That cassette also included portions of the radio broadcast of Bing singing with Glenn Miller's Army Air Force Band (or its official name — the American Band of the AEF).

This, of course, has me wondering if Pandora also will be playing Bing's songs with Glenn Miller's AEF band, since *I'll Be Seeing You* aired on its Glenn Miller station. But I'm also wondering where they got a copy of that broadcast. Was it ever put on CD or did they somehow get a copy of the ICC cassette?

I try to keep up with all the CD releases of both Bing and Glenn Miller and I've never seen the Bing/Glenn Miller broadcast put on CD (although many other Glenn Miller Army Air Force Band radio broadcasts have been released on CD). Don't know if any thought has been given to ICC or one of the labels releasing the Bing/Miller broadcast on CD. I'm sure the latest version of CEDAR restoration software could clean up the existing broadcast copy and make it sound very good.

Bing and Glenn get ready for the broadcast.

Miller's biographer, George T. Simon, described that recording session (which took place on August 31, 1944) in his book on Miller:

> Crosby was completely knocked out by the band, and, after the session was over, took off a beautiful hand-painted tie and autographed it to "Glenn Miller's AAF Band — the Greatest Thing Since the Invention of Cup Mutes!"
>
> Trumpeter Bernie Privin was immensely impressed with Crosby's total lack of formality, especially the way it contrasted with the Miller disciplinary attitude that he and the other rebels resented so deeply. "I remember Glenn came in and immediately said, 'OK, fellers, let's go.' But Bing stepped in and said, 'Hey, wait a minute. This is a freebie for the guys, isn't it?' And he brought out bottles of Scotch and whiskey for all of us. I got to tell you, that day we recorded some of the best stuff the band ever played!"

Simon went on to say that the master copy of that broadcast (as well as the September 16, 1944, broadcast recording with Dinah Shore) does not exist anymore. So perhaps what ICC released on cassette was an "air check" copy. In any case, thought you and perhaps the other club members might find that interesting. Again, would love to see Bing's WWII London radio broadcasts released on CD.

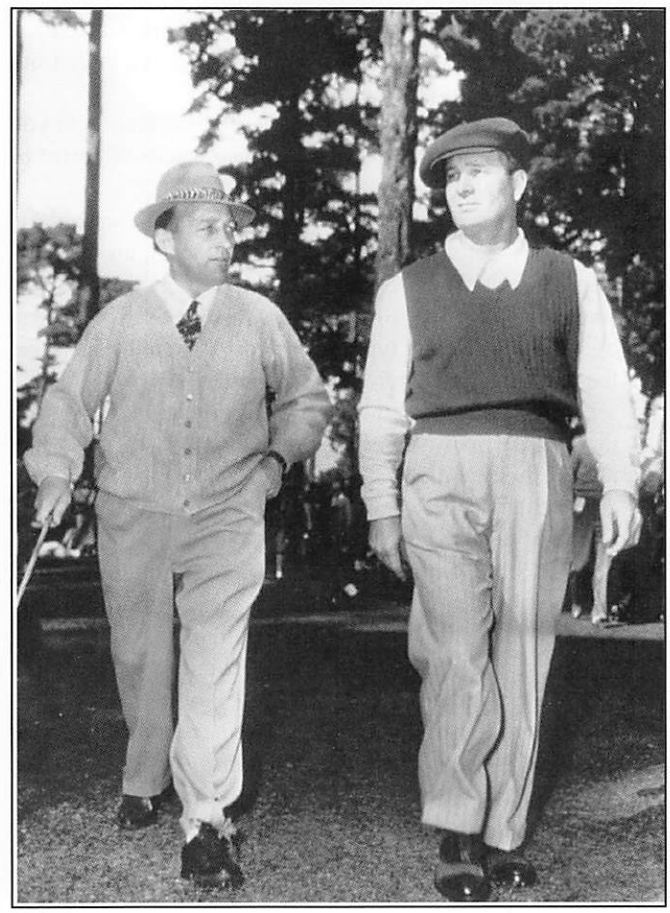
(Editor: The BBC still has a copy of the August 30 broadcast so they could have made "I'll Be Seeing You" available to Pandora. However the BBC version of the song was also issued on a CD called "Service Bands on the Air - Volume 2, Victory Party (Live)" in 1995 and that's probably where Pandora got hold of it.

The broadcast with Glenn Miller was found on a poor quality acetate and it was issued on an LP by one of our members and later put out on a cassette we issued. It would be interesting to see if the quality could be improved for a CD release although one of the tracks jumps once or twice.)

John Newton, by email from Wilmington, Delaware, USA

During earlier emails, I mentioned acquiring an unusual - and probably unique - Bing record that had recently turned up on eBay. The eBay description of the record made one believe that it was an acetate recording that was made at a private roast for Bing's friend, golfer Jimmy Demaret. It described Bing as being Master of Ceremonies at the event, and that the recording was somewhat risqué. But, upon playing and hearing the recording, a good bit of that description was wrong.

Here's what a good listening, coupled with some research (including your indispensable Bing Day-By-Day book) disclosed. A bit of a story developed here, disclosing the lengths to which Bing might go for a friend.



Jimmy Demaret with Bing at Pebble Beach

Bing received an invitation to attend a Stag Dinner for his friend, professional golfer Jimmy Demaret. The dinner, for around 200 invited guests, was to be held at Toots Shor's in New York City on June 5th 1951. Apparently at the time he received the invitation, Bing was on a fishing trip with Bill Morrow in Wyoming, Montana and other locations. Prior to driving on to

Vancouver, Canada, they stopped in Idaho, probably on May 28th, where Bing located facilities to make a private recording. He sent the record to New York, to be played during the Stag Dinner for his friend on June 5th, and this is that record.

The record is a 12-inch, one-sided, professionally recorded acetate that plays at 78rpm. Bing's speaking and singing are very clear, although there is "surface noise" from start to finish.

Following is a word-by-word description, transcribed as best I can from an in-depth and slow listening to both the speaking and singing on the recording . . .

The recording begins with Bing briefly whistling a couple of bars of "Home on the Range". He then begins to speak:

Hi-ya fellas, Hi-ya, this is Bing Crosby, Gary Crosby's brother.

I'm sorry that we have no musical accompaniment here, no piano player, but I'm cutting this little disc for Jim, cutting it up here in the wilds of northern Idaho.

Seems like the government closed all the joints, all the hook shops up here, in order to get the Indians to their spring planting, so all the piano players have pulled out for Las Vegas.

Oh, dear, I wish I could be there in person with you guys. I'll bet you're having a million yacks, a barrel of laughs.

Let's see, I have the invitation here, just arrived the other day. Let's see here, invitation hmmm, an informal stag affair at Toots Shor's (Bing whistles) an informal stag affair at Toots Shor's. Boy, this could be called a cyclone in Kansas, a typhoon in Florida, or to be accurate, the battle of the bulge.

Says here it's limited to 200 invited guests. I'll bet there's that many under the tables by now. Jeez, I'd like to be there with you. I really would. Not only to congratulate Jim on this epic occasion, but it would certainly be wonderful, be a great feeling to stumble out on 51st Street about 10 o'clock tomorrow morning with chopped liver in my hair, a hot hat-check girl under each arm, and wondering what town I'm in.

Let's see what it says here. Cocktails at 6:30, dinner at 8, entertainment at 10. Well, nobody'll eat anything, that's a cinch. So, by 10 o'clock their ability to judge the quality of the entertainment is going to be somewhat depreciated. In fact, I'll bet you could take out the appendix of the guest of honor by now and he'd never feel a thing.

Well, here's the, the following is going to represent my contribution to the entertainment. I hope you're all stiff enough now so you won't be too critical.

Here we go, sans accompaniment, a cappella as it were.

(Bing starts to sing now, with his own lyrics to the tune of "Bill" from 'Show Boat')

Well he's just our Jim, a Technicolor guy
When you meet him on the links you cannot look at him
His clothes you'll find, will strike you blind
His socks though attractive, are radioactive
And the pants he'll wear, on his ample derriere, make the rainbow dim
But I love him, because he's color-blind
Because he's just our Jim

(Bing shifts now, without any pause, now singing to the tune of "Alice Blue Gown")

In his beautiful Alice Blue slacks
and his tux with the belt in the back
For that putt he must sink
he wears undies of pink
His supporter is covered
with silver blue mink
'Round his club heads he wraps woollen shawls
and in cashmere he cradles his balls
Yes, his wardrobe is smashing
but that orange shirt is clashing
And his wardrobe though fancy
don't call him Nancy
Toasted of harm and hammon (?)
he takes his with lemon

(Now Bing sings one last line, reverting back to the tune of "Bill", ending the record with . . .)

Because he's just our Jim

A Letter to Mary

An interesting item popped up on eBay in December. Headed "Bing Crosby Memorabilia", the description continued:

A fabulous collection of early Bing Crosby Memorabilia, from the mid 1920's. With 4 items and 4 signatures (one letter is 2 pages) According to the family legend, Bing Crosby and Mary Rice had some type of an "affair".

Included are a paper "playbill", featuring Bing Crosby and his partner Al Rinker (1925-1926 is their timeframe of being partners)....signed "To Mary Rice with Felicitations, Bing Crosby". Framed approx. 8" x 10".

A Todd Studios photograph signed "With Best Wishes Mary Rice, Bing Crosby" (framed size approx. 8" x 10").

A framed Letter to the "Misses Rice and Shaefer", on stationery from the "Book-Cadillac Hotel, Detroit, Friday the 14th, signed "Bing Crosby" (approx. 11" x 8")

A 2-page "hand written" letter, in bold pencil....written personally to "Mary", on stationery from the Hotel "Rienzi, Chicago, Thursday", and signed "Sincerely Yours, Bing Crosby". Each page is approx. 9" x 6", and framed together in double sided glass.

These items are fresh from an estate where they have been cherished...in 1930 Crosby married the actress "Dixie Lee", so we are sure they are all prior to that date, and most likely from 1925 to the late 1920's.

Well, using Bing Crosby – Day by Day" I was able

to work out the actual dates in 1927 and I sent the information to the seller who was appropriately grateful. Here are the details.

1927

October 14, Friday. Staying at the Book-Cadillac Hotel in Detroit, Bing sends a typewritten letter on hotel notepaper to the Misses Rice and Shaefer.

The Misses Rice and Shaefer:

My dear Ladies –

I must confess that I was considerably nonplussed disconcerted or something by your rather novel request of recent date. Always wary of a hoax emanating from the more playful spirits of the band, I was at first blush, a little suspicious. But a more careful examination of your epistle convinced me, for the once, of its sincerity and I am accordingly hastening to comply with the desire contained therein.

Unhappily the present instant finds me utterly bereft of any suitable likenesses other than newspaper cuts, which I am enclosing.

However, we are planning on sitting for portraits in Cincinnati next week while playing at the spacious Castle Farms, and, if your avidity for a daguerreotype remains unassuaged, I shall dispatch one by the earliest post.

With kindest regards, I beg to remain the wolf of the 49th Street Flying field.

Bing Crosby

I had to look up "daguerreotype" and it seems that it was the first commercially successful photographic process (1839-1860) in the history of photography.

The daguerreotype.

Named after the inventor, Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, each daguerreotype is a unique image on a silvered copper plate. An image of it was included on eBay and is reproduced here. Unfortunately we can see the image of the man photographing it but nevertheless it looks to be a very nice item.

It would seem that Miss Rice and Mr. Crosby got together in subsequent days and another letter was sent a few weeks later.

November 17, Thursday. Staying at the Hotel Rienzi in Chicago, Bing sends a hand-written letter on hotel notepaper to Mary Rice.

Dear Mary –

Am hastening to enclose the daguerreotype as promised. Not very fetching but serviceable and at least a likeness, however imperfect.

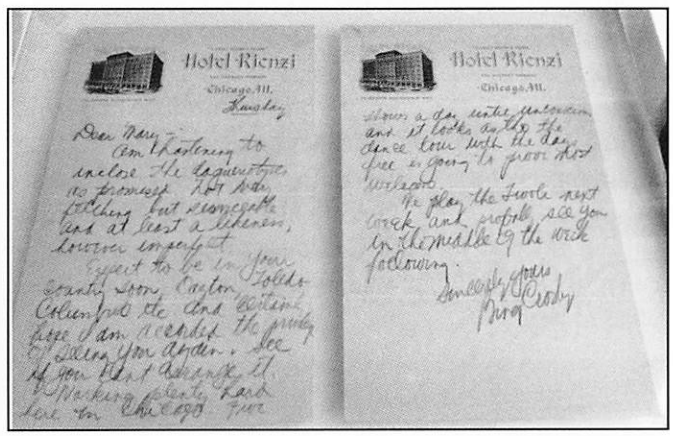
Expect to be in your county soon, Dayton, Toledo, Columbus etc and certainly hope I am accorded the privilege of seeing you again. See if you can arrange it.

Working plenty hard here in Chicago. Five shows a day until unconscious and it looks as tho the dance tour with the days free is going to prove most welcome.

We play the Tivoli next week and probably see you in the middle of the week following.

Sincerely yours

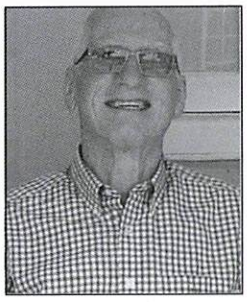
Bing Crosby



We know nothing about Mary Rice or Miss Shaefer and it would be nice to know more.

The item was initially offered at $25 with an unknown reserve price and it quickly jumped to $120 before actually being sold for $460 plus a lot of postage and packing!

A NOTE FROM AUSTRALIA

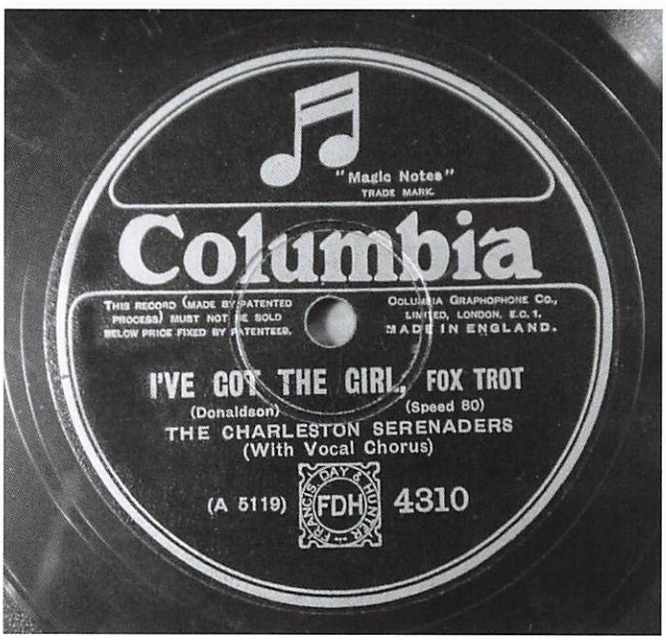


Graham Pascoe writes from Bathurst, NSW, Australia:

THE BIG ISSUE is a fortnightly street magazine sold Australia-wide and its Christmas issue for 2016 did Bing proud with a full page titled 'Bing Crosby, Christmas, 1954' telling how Bing introduced Irving Berlin's song in *Holiday Inn* and used it again in the eponymous 1954 movie. A glorious colour photo of the four stars in the latter film is a real attention-grabber. Noting briefly how other singers including Lady Gaga and Boy George have also 'had a crack' at the song, Crosby is noted as 'a canny businessman' who loved golf.

It's interesting to learn how others became interested in Bing and collecting his records and the role of fathers in Ken Crossland's and Lars Roth's enthusiasm described in BING #174 contrasts with Anton's story in the previous issue. When I was a lad in Melbourne, Australia, in the mid-1940s I couldn't avoid hearing Bing on our radio as his records dominated so many programs. It was only some years later in the early 1950s when my closest mate told me that he'd heard Bing sing in the early 1930s in a Mack Sennett short and urged me to listen to the young Bing. I heard his 1933 recording of 'Beautiful Girl' and I was hooked.

In 2017 Australians are reminded that ninety years ago their new parliament house was opened in Canberra by the Duke and Duchess of York, later to become King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. It's unlikely that an important event in entertainment which occurred in 1927 will receive any attention in the media. Even those with an interest in Bing Crosby would be unlikely to realise that it's ninety years since his first record was released here.



'I've Got the Girl', Bing's duet with Al Rinker had been recorded in October 1926 and in 1927 it was pressed by the Columbia Graphophone company in Sydney. A subsidiary of the British Columbia company, the record was credited to the Charleston Serenaders and Crosby and Rinker were simply described as 'vocal chorus' (as in The United Kingdom). It backed 'If You See Sally' by Ted Lewis and his band and sold for four shillings which was almost two hours of work for the average man and for only one shilling a Sydney person could get into a city cinema's front stalls.

The coupling of 'I've Got the Girl' with a Ted Lewis recording undoubtedly resulted in Bing being heard in many Australian homes. An indication of the popularity of Ted Lewis is indicated by the inclusion of thirteen of his records in the Columbia record catalogue in 1928. If some considered 'I've Got the Girl' to be an appealing song they could have bought also versions by Nick Lucas ('the crooning troubadour') and by Abe Lyman's Californians, both on Brunswick.

Five Whiteman recordings with Crosby vocals were also released in Australia in 1927, all on His Master's Voice. The first was probably his first solo recording, 'Muddy Water', backed with 'Ain't She Sweet' by Nat Shilkret and the Victor Orchestra. An HMV disc with what was promoted as 'Two superb foxtrots, played in the characteristic Whiteman manner. New effects, etc.' offered 'I'm in Love Again' with 'Birth of the Blues' and Bing was one of four vocalists on the first title.

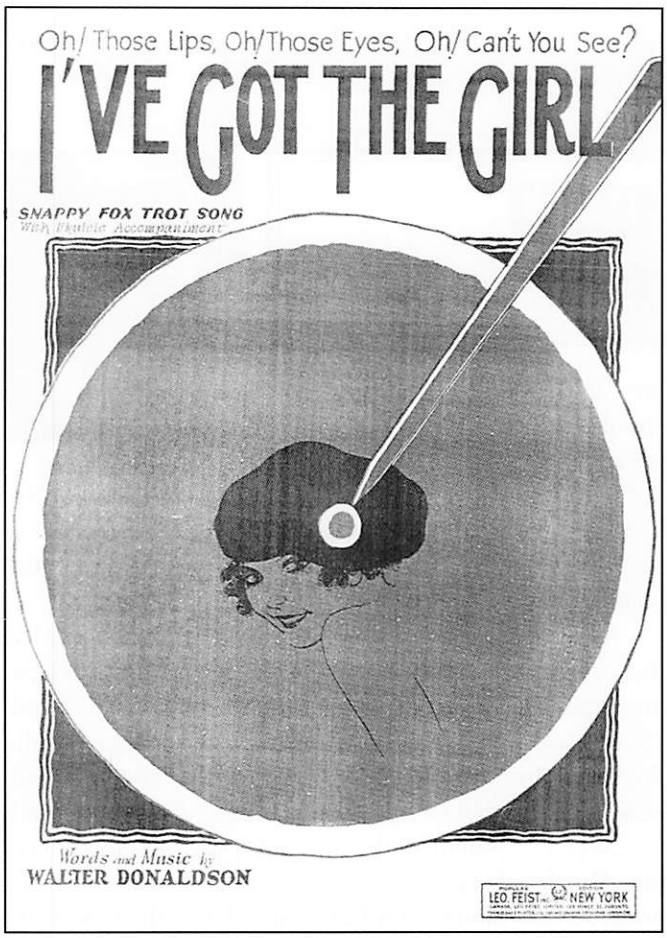
In December, HMV used the same coupling for an Australian release as did Victor in the USA: the Crosby-Rinker-Barris trio's recording of 'Mississippi Mud' combined with 'I Left My Sugar Standing in the Rain' and 'Sweet L'il' combined with 'Ain't She Sweet'. In time for sale in the New Year, Whiteman's 'Shanghai Dream Man' with a vocal by Bing, Jack Fulton, Charles Gaylord and Austin Young, was coupled with the International Orchestra's 'Paree'.

Bing's name appeared on none of the record labels. Australians would not see that until April 1928 when 'Miss Annabelle Lee' on HMV not only identified the Paul Whiteman Orchestra but also 'Harry Barris, Bing Crosby, Alton Rinker'. It was backed by 'Hear Dem Bells' by Vernon Dalhart and Carson Robison.

Recently I was delving through my record cabinet and was surprised to find some long-forgotten 45rpm records.

Two were Bing Crosby Historical Society issues, the first of which I would have obtained when I attended its tribute in 1983. (In 1982 Helen gave me a surprise

Christmas present of the return air fares to Tacoma.) One disc has 'Anthem of the Clams', 'I've Got the Girl'. 'Why Do I Like You' from March 1943 and 'It Might As Well Be Spring' by Bing and George Burns from Philco Radio Time January 1948. They were from the private collections of Vernon Wesley Taylor and Bill Osborn. It's interesting that Bill's liner notes state that the correct title of the second song is 'I've Got a Girl' and it's labelled thus on the 45rpm record. He also wrote that this issue was the first time the song had been reproduced on disc. This disc may have been from an earlier BCHS tribute.


Oh! Those Lips, Oh! Those Eyes, Oh! Can't You See?
I'VE GOT THE GIRL
SNAPPY FOX TROT SONG
With Ukulele Accompaniment
Words and Music by
WALTER DONALDSON
LEO. FEIST NEW YORK

Although Crosby and Rinker clearly sing "I've Got a Girl", the sheet music says "I've Got the Girl". Gene Austin recorded the song too in 1927 and he sings "the".

The other disc has 'High Hopes' on each side: one version by Bing singing 'a whimsical parody' of the song; the other side features the Cazenovia College (New York) choir's version of the song. The disc was apparently produced by the Cazenovia College Alumni Association as a celebration of a 1963 fund-raising event and it was donated to the BCHS in 1986. It's a donut disc with the large centre hole and I'm unable to play it.

Another surprise record is a 45 rpm extended play disc titled 'THE KING OF JAZZ SOUVENIR RECORD' issued by The Victorian Bing Crosby Society. Side 1 has 'Ragamuffin Romeo', 'It Happened in Monterey' and 'I Like to Do Things for You'; side 2 has 'Happy Feet', 'A Bench in the Park' and 'Song of the Dawn'. Perhaps it was produced when the Society held two special screenings of KING OF JAZZ in Melbourne in 1978.

The articles in BING No. 174 on the stage production of *Holiday Inn* and particularly David Buchanan's note that some critical reviews were not kind reminded me that the movie itself received some unwelcome publicity in Australia before the film was released here. An article in music magazine *Tempo* wrote that 'this is the first time I've ever really tired of hearing Crosby sing'. The writer had been listening to a new US Decca album of ten songs from the movie but he attributed the fault to Irving Berlin's songs rather than Bing's singing.

Holiday Inn opened at Sydney's Regent Theatre on Boxing Day 1942 and by then *Tempo*'s readers of a later edition had been able to read an alternative view describing the film as a 'riot of dance and songs'. It had been advertised in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on its opening day as 'A joyous jubilee of fun! 13 Irving Berlin song hits...The greatest musical of them all'. Two days later the newspaper's critic wrote, 'Paramount's song and dance festival ... is one of those tinkling back-stage comedies ... light, tuneful and frolicsome, a kaleidoscope showpiece for two of Hollywood's top-flight entertainers'. The Regent screened it for one day short of six weeks. Then it went south to Melbourne's Capitol Theatre which, like Sydney's Regent, seated over two thousand patrons. Its run at the Capitol lasted nine weeks, probably helped by *The Herald*'s enthusiastic review which noted 'catchy tunes, plenty of crooning and marvellous dancing ... Bing and Fred do passing well as light comedians'.

Catchy tunes they were but Australian's would have to wait until June 1943 before they could buy Bing's recordings of songs from the movie. *Tempo* reviewed five of the records of the songs in its June-July issue. Of 'White Christmas' the reviewer wrote, 'Boy, what a record, what backing and what a voice good old Bing has!' It entered the Australian charts immediately and remained for ten months, in top place from June to October. It remained on sale until 1956 with lifetime sales in excess of forty-three thousand. (Bing's re-recorded versions of the song from 1947 and 1954 were not issued as singles in Australia.) It was not Bing's top-selling single record in Australia; that honour belongs to his June 1942 recordings of 'Silent Night, Holy Night' and 'Adeste Fideles' which was pressed here in 1944.

As I write this, I'm looking at the 23 December 2016 issue of the Sydney morning newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*. A full page is devoted to 'How White Christmas classic was born in sunny California'. Telling the story of the song and illustrated by a still of Bing

singing the song with Marjorie Reynolds in the movie, it notes 'Crosby's recording of 'White Christmas' has continued to sell' and is the best-selling single ever.

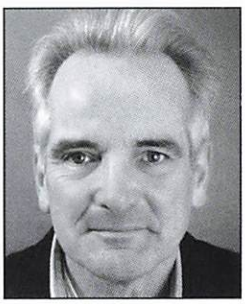
Keith Parkinson's swan song after a great series appropriately deals with a very different film, *The Country Girl*. It reached Australia in 1955. A gala preview of the film and Danny Kaye in *Assignment Children* was held in Sydney one evening in July with proceeds in aid of The United Nations Children's Fund. Its first runs began in August in Melbourne and Sydney. Long runs in each city reflected the praise of the critics who singled out Bing for top honours. In Sydney *The Sun-Herald* reckoned 'Bing Crosby, looking astonishingly hungry and troubled and disappointed, gives the best performance of his career'. Back in 1934, that newspaper (then under a different title) had complained of his performance in *We're Not Dressing*: 'Bing is not at all like a sailor ... Each time the music begins on a moaning note you say to yourself "Here it is again", and you are right'.

Finally, as far as I know, John Salisbury's THE CROSBY YEARS was not broadcast here but Gord Atkinson's series was broadcast on radio in Melbourne in the 1970s and in 1995.

Graham Pascoe **gpascoe34@bigpond.com**

(Editor: Many thanks Graham. Incidentally Graham has a weekly radio show which always manages to have some Bing content. See 'Bing on the Box' for more details.)

BING SINGS WHILST BREGMAN SINGS



Jeremy Rose talks about one of his favourite albums.

The death of arranger/composer Buddy Bregman at the beginning of 2017 robbed us of yet another talent associated with the amazing career of Bing Crosby.

Malcolm has provided a comprehensive obituary later in this issue, but I would like to concentrate on the fruits of the one-off collaboration between Mr. Bregman and Mr. Crosby - the 1956 album *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Sings (BSWBS)*.

I should say immediately that this has always been one of my absolute favourite Bing albums, ever since I first encountered the tracks on one of the many re-releases of the album since 1956 - this one in the early 70s. At the time I had no idea whatsoever of the background to the recording sessions, and I was fascinated to learn later that the album has divided opinion amongst Crosby collectors down the years.

The driving force behind the production of the album was Bregman himself. He had befriended Bing's eldest son Gary when they had worked together on a recording session at Decca. Bing's long exclusive contract with Decca had ended at the end of 1955, and although he went on to sign a three-year non-exclusive contract, he was now free to work for other companies.

Having obtained Bing's private home telephone number, Bregman rang him and asked if he would be interested in recording an album for the newly-formed Verve record label. A meeting was arranged, during which Buddy played a few numbers at the piano. As he went on to relate in a 2001 interview, "He agreed to do it and a deal was worked out, and I was given carte blanche with the arrangements and musicians. He didn't even insist on his regular pianist Buddy Cole being on the date. The only thing Bing stipulated was that he had to record at nine o'clock in the morning, because his voice was best at that time of day". (No mention of Bing's golfing commitments, which I suspect might also have played a part in that particular stipulation!)

Verve Records had been founded earlier in 1956 by the producer Norman Granz, and one of the earliest projects had been the first of Ella Fitzgerald's celebrated "Songbook" albums - devoted to the songs of Cole Porter - for which Buddy was the arranger and conductor. Granz was also Fitzgerald's personal manager and produced the album for his own label. For the Crosby/Bregman collaboration, Buddy himself produced the album, and I think that holds the clue as to why the album has divided opinion over the years.

To my ears, the Fitzgerald album shows much clearer evidence of a producer's influence over the arrangements. They are more tailored to the specific style and sound of the singer, show greater fidelity to the mood of the lyrics and they work more within the overall aim of the whole "Songbook" project. There is more use of strings than on *BSWBS*, less evidence of Buddy's trademark brass chord "blasts", and a general setting of the orchestral sound further back in the mix.

The final sessions for that album took place on March 27th, 1956. Some four months later, on 11th June, Buddy was back in the studio with Bing, having been given "carte blanche with the arrangements." He went to town!

More of that later, but before I move on to a track-by-track overview of the album, I want to address a couple of the aspects of *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman*

Sings which - as I mentioned earlier - have divided opinion over the years, and in order to do this I want to cite the views of two eminent Crosbyphiles.

One of my main sources of reference for this article was Fred Reynolds's monumental five-volume *The Crosby Collection.* As well as providing discographical details of every one of Bing's commercially recorded titles, Fred also gives a critical commentary on each title. His reservations about Bregman's arrangements, and therefore the album as a whole, can perhaps be summed up by this comment on *Cheek to Cheek*, "...in the instrumental half chorus that follows, any remaining elegance and charm of the song is blown away. Crosby fights a losing battle in what is a travesty of an arrangement". Elsewhere, Fred objects to the fact that Bregman regularly ignores the "mood" of the lyrics. I can see his point, but only to a certain extent.

I think the late, lamented Ken Barnes came closer to putting his finger on the problem when he wrote, "...it is very difficult to take Buddy Bregman seriously as a reliable orchestral accompanist. His writing can be reasonably tasteful...but his brass scoring is ham-fisted and (can be) bitterly distracting..." As the producer of Bing's final six albums, Ken - of all people - should know!

I think the key word in Ken's remark is "accompanist". To my mind, Bregman is arranging the *melody* and not the song as a whole. In other words, he's not paying much - if any - attention to the lyrics. In a purely instrumental project this isn't so much of a problem, but where there is a vocal soloist carrying the melody line, it's much more contentious.

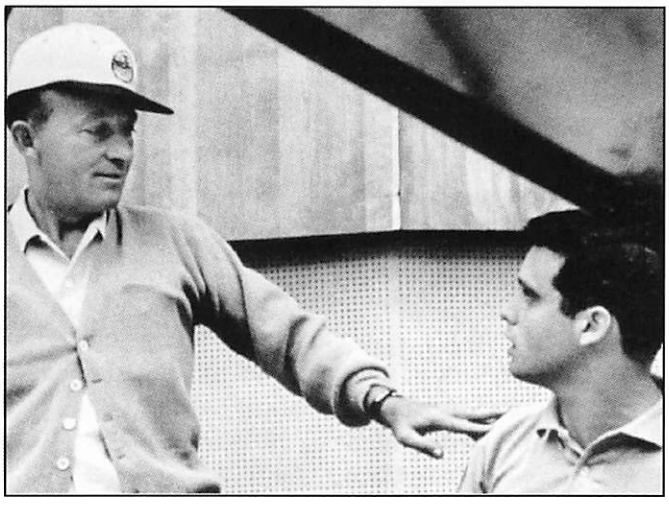
As I type this, I'm listening to the *Swingin' Standards* album, which features the solely instrumental forces of "Buddy Bregman and his Dance Band!" (Buddy's exclamation mark..!), and although it's a very enjoyable "swingin'" listen, there's no getting away from the fact that Buddy takes some well-known lyrical ballads ("My Heart Stood Still" for example) and - well - blasts them out of the water! (*My* exclamation mark..!)

I think that *BSWBS* does suffer from this approach, and although I still love the album, I have to admit that - on some tracks at least - it could almost be re-titled *Bregman Swings Whilst Bing Sings Along.*

The Ella Fitzgerald "Cole Porter Songbook" album doesn't suffer from this approach to anything like the same extent, but then there is the guiding (restraining?) hand of a producer between arranger and vocalist, and I wonder whether, had there been a Ken Barnes or a Norman Granz involved in the production process of *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings*, we might have had a much less controversial result.

The album was recorded over two three-hour sessions on two consecutive days (remember that 9a.m. start!) in June 1956, with *The Blue Room, Jeepers Creepers, I've Got Five Dollars, 'Deed I Do, The Song Is You* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It* being laid down on 11th June and, *They All Laughed, Heat Wave, September in the Rain, Cheek to Cheek, Have You Met Miss Jones* and *Mountain Greenery* the following day.

As Ken Barnes said, "The choice of songs is impeccable", and none of them had been previously recorded commercially by Bing. Despite the undoubted quality of the material, I find some of the tracks - how shall I put it? - slightly less successful than others. What follows is a purely personal view of the "hits" and (relative) "misses".



Bing and Buddy at work on the album.

"The Song Is You" is a great opening track. Buddy sets out his stall from the down-beat and Bing does what he does best - sits effortlessly on the back-beat and swings his way equally effortlessly through the melody. It's a joy to listen to. This one does exactly what it says on the tin - Bing's singing and Bregman's swinging!

I think "Mountain Greenery" is equally successful.

A relatively restrained arrangement and another impeccable performance from Bing. Nice to hear the verse, too...

I have to agree with Fred Reynolds and Ken Barnes about "Cheek to Cheek". Bregman's characteristic *fortissimo* brass chord "blasts" are way too forward in the mix and extremely distracting. I think you can hear quite clearly that Bing is having to battle against the arrangement. Great song. Great singer. Great shame...

"'Deed I Do" is almost as challenging, but Bing sounds more relaxed than in "Cheek to Cheek".

Ken Barnes said that he was amazed that Bing managed to stay in tune in the middle of "Heat Wave", thanks to Buddy Bregman introducing some "suspect chords". I've listened to this over and over again, and I can only think that he means the first four bars of the third appearance of the chorus, where the arrangement is in the minor rather than the major. Bing sounds - fleetingly - *slightly* unsure of the pitch. Other than that, I think this a very enjoyable track.

"The Blue Room" and "Have You Met Miss Jones?" are two of my favourite tracks. Buddy's "blasts" are less to the fore in the former and confined to the instrumental 16-bar break in the latter. Once again, Bing swings his way effortlessly through his contributions.

With "I've Got Five Dollars" we're back in "Cheek to Cheek" territory. After a relaxed instrumental introduction and first chorus from Bing, the beginning of the middle eight sees Buddy proceeding to "blast it out of the water". It's a shame, because it's a good song and Bing seems to be having a good time.

I think "They All Laughed" is the track that comes closest to successfully combining the "sound" of Bregman and Bing's vocal delivery. As Fred Reynolds says in "The Crosby Years", this Gershwin gem "swings lightly and naturally from start to finish". A real highlight...

Unfortunately, with "Nice Work If You Can Get It", all the good work done by the previous track is undone, with the arrangement jarring aggressively against Bing's relaxed vocals.

Things don't get any better with "September in the Rain" which, for me, is just one brass "crash" chord too far! I've always loved this song, and although I have no problem with swing arrangements of ballads, I think that this would be more at home as an instrumental track on Buddy's *Swingin' Standards* album. This is one where I *do* think the distance between the style of the arrangement and the sentiments of the lyrics is just too great.

Mercer and Warren's "Jeepers Creepers", however, is a great final track. As Fred Reynolds says, "Bing swings this remarkably rhythmic song to perfection". Bregman reins in the worst of his excesses and provides a tight, disciplined arrangement which comes as close as any on the album to fitting Bing like a glove.

I think that *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings* represents a real landmark at a point just a few years after the half-way point in Bing's recording career.

A few weeks before recording *BSWBS,* Bing was in the studio recording *Songs I Wish I Had Sung (The First Time Around),* his "tribute" album to other famous artists for whom he had an admiration. Although this album is another of my firm favourites, I think it's fair to say that the arrangements wouldn't have sounded out of place in a recording ten years previously.

The fact that Bing was still keen to explore *new* musical styles speaks volumes for his commitment to his craft.

Having voiced his reservations about the album, Ken Barnes went on to say, "Despite all these faults, it was refreshing at the time to hear Crosby with a modern-sounding orchestra and while this album is no match for Sinatra's "Songs for Swingin' Lovers" classic LP, it was a step - albeit a hesitant one - in the right direction"

I, for one, wish that Bing had taken a few *more* steps in that direction, but I am nevertheless very grateful to have *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings* on my shelves.

Jeremy Rose

BING ON THE BOX

Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights - USA & Canada

Bing's films and other items seen on TV since our last issue was prepared were:

Carson on TCM	TCM
Going My Way	TCM
Here Comes the Groom	TCM
High Society	TCM
High Time	FXM
Road to Morocco	TCM
Road to Singapore	TCM
Road to Zanzibar	TCM
Robin and the 7 Hoods	TCM
Stagecoach	GET TV
Stagecoach	STARZ ENCORE
Star Night at the Cocoanut Grove	TCM
That's Entertainment	TCM
White Christmas (multiple showings)	AMC
Bing Crosby and The Sounds Of Christmas	GET TV

Mary Pickford brings Bing to the microphone in *Star Night at the Cocoanut Grove.*

The biggest surprise was the showing of *Star Night at the Cocoanut Grove* on TCM in November. "Archiefit" writing on Crosby Fan World said:

> "A few days back TCM showed a beautiful (it must be a restored version, though no mention was made of that) version of *Star Night at the Cocoanut Grove*. The color was brilliant and bright. Bing's too brief scene was in beautiful glowing color. They may have gone overboard on the makeup for Bing as it almost looked like he was wearing lipstick. But it was a beautiful picture and most welcome and surprising to be seen on TCM. I don't remember this film being shown on TCM before. Unfortunately (I checked) it's not part of TCM's website "Movies on Demand" section. But it was a pleasant surprise indeed to see this little gem. No fanfare or announcement was made of this Star Night showing either. I just happened to check out the TCM schedule and there it was. That's how easy it would have been to miss it."

I recall that the film popped up unannounced on TCM in the UK some years ago too. Zane Johnson responding on Crosby Fan World mentioned that the film was included as an extra in the DVD set "TCM Greatest Classic Film Collection: Astaire & Rogers (The Gay Divorcee / Top Hat / Swing Time / Shall We Dance)" which is still available from Amazon for a very reasonable $9.99.

USA & Canadian Radio

Crosby Internet Radio

I have continued to be an avid listener to Crosby Internet Radio over recent months and I was interested to see another comment by "Archiefit" on Crosby Fan World back in November.

> "While I still continue to this day to listen to a couple of Bing radio shows every week from CDs it's nice to be able to turn on Bing Radio anytime you feel like it and hear Bing singing away at all times of the day or night. This guy never gets tired, shows 24 hours a day! I have only one wish and that would be for Bing Radio to announce their schedule of shows to be played in advance. Even if it's only a daily schedule listed showing what shows are coming on and what time they'll be on it would be better than no advance announcement at all. The most frustrating thing about Bing radio is you never know what's coming so you don't know when to tune in to hear what you want to hear and what

happens is I usually will tune in and hear the end of some show that I really would have liked to have heard the whole thing. But without a schedule listing you miss half of what you'd like to tune in for. They really need to show their program schedule, otherwise it's a perfect way to hear Bing. But I love that a Bing Radio even exists. Wouldn't we all have loved this years ago?"

I can see his point but I suspect it would create an awful lot of work for Bing Crosby Enterprises. I do, however, agree whole-heartedly that it's great that Crosby Internet Radio exists.

Nearly all of the 15-minute Bing Crosby Show broadcasts from 1954-56 have now been played and there were 550 altogether. Details can be found on the BING magazine web site in the *Bing on Radio* section.

On November 21, the broadcast reverted to Crosby Christmas Internet Radio as in previous years. Lots of "Christmas Sings with Bing" and other radio shows originally broadcast around Holiday time. Then on January 3, we returned to a wonderful mixture of Bing's radio shows with the 1954-56 shows and the Crosby-Clooney shows both starting from No. 1 again. Plenty of KMH, Philco, Chesterfield, GE and the excellent Bing's Basement shows of course.

Make a point of listening to Crosby Internet Radio whenever you can. Go to http://bingcrosby.com/crosby-internet-radio or use the link in the News section of the BING magazine web site

Other USA shows

Arne Fogel's weekly radio program "The Bing Shift" is still being broadcast on Sundays at 8 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota. It can be accessed on demand at *http://kbem.podbean.com/?s=The+Bing+Shift* and it's always enjoyable with an eclectic selection. For example, his show on November 6, had a segment titled "Bing Sings in the 60's" and the following were included:

Livin' on Lovin' - Something Sort of Grandish - Morgen - Sentimental Gentleman from Georgia - Step to the Rear - I Get Ideas

Arne completed the program with:-

I'm Afraid of You - In a Little Spanish Town - Look to Your Heart - Love Me or Leave Me - The Moon Was Yellow - My Heart Goes Crazy - Road to Hong Kong - Lazy Day - Keep It a Secret - Memphis Blues (with Ella Fitzgerald)

Jack Boyle's BING *for the SEASONS* show from Hudson Valley in New York State has had a different theme each month. In November, it was *Jazz FM Thanksgiving!* with Bing singing with Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Al Jolson, Kathryn Crosby, Harry Crosby, The Mills Brothers and The Andrews Sisters. December brought a *Merry Christmas Special* with many Crosby favorites for the time of year including some such as "Pat-a-Pan", "White World of Winter" and "When a Child Is Born" which aren't heard that frequently. Nice to see that "The Secret of Christmas" was used too because I think this is a lovely song.

Jack's January program was titled "Songs for the New Year" and used songs such as "Let's Start the New Year Right", "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive" and rarer items like "Suddenly There's a Valley", "Step to the Rear" and "Both Sides Now".

For his February show "Unforgettable Love Songs", Jack used tracks like "My Funny Valentine", "True Love" (with Rosie), "Because of You" and "The Song Is Ended". He also introduced suitable songs by Al Jolson, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole and Joni James into the mix.

The program airs twice monthly, the first Sunday of the month at 7 pm, with an Encore Presentation on the third Sunday of the month at 9 am ET on Hudson Valley Public Radio's JAZZ FM (and on the Internet at HVPR.ORG).

Greg Van Beek's weekly radio series Nostalgia Radio Time on 1420 AM WJUB has continued its long run on Saturday nights starting at 9 pm (CST) / 10 pm (ET). Greg always has a "Bing Sings" segment in the hour-long program. His Crosby special on December 24 provided a nice soundtrack to our Christmas Eve festivities and was Greg's 15th annual Bing Crosby Christmas Special on Nostalgia Radio Time. He gave us an excellent hour of beloved Christmas songs and carols by the voice of Christmas himself. Greg used many of Bing's more recent seasonal songs from the 1960s and '70s such as "Round and Round the Christmas Tree", "It's Christmas Time Again" and "O Holy Night".

There was a special treat on Greg's February 18 show as he included the Family Theater broadcast of February 27, 1947 "J. Smith & Wife". This featured Bing and Irene Dunne as a couple who have just died in a boating accident but they don't realize it. Very moving indeed. The Family Theater productions started on February 13, 1947, and ran until 1969. *Variety* magazine liked it.

> Bing Crosby went straight Friday night on Mutual's Family Theater in a warm captivating dramatic vignette tabbed *J. Smith and Wife* with Irene Dunne playing opposite him. The story of a married couple (who die in a boat sinking) outside the gates of the Elysian fields was full of tenderness and beauty key to the thematic purpose of the Family series.
> *(Variety,* March 5, 1947)

Greg had another bonus for us on February 25 with the Jack Benny Program from 4/4/48 with Bing as guest singing "Haunted Heart" as well as taking part in a skit.

You can catch Greg online at the www.1420thebreeze.com site or you can listen to the

previous two weeks shows by going to the website and clicking on the 'audio archives' link.

The **Star Spangled Radio Hour** can still be heard at http://www.cruisin1430.com/media/podcast/star-spangled-radio-hour and Bing pops up now and then. There was a double bill on December 17 with KMH from December 24, 1942 and Command Performance of the same date. On February 25, we heard Command Performance #30 from August 30, 1942 and G. I. Journal #12 from October 9, 1943. The shows may still be available for listening.

We have been mentioning **Rich Conaty's** long-running "The Big Broadcast" show for many years and we are very sorry to announce that Rich passed away in December. He was 62. We were aware that he had been unwell as for the last few months the station had been re-broadcasting his earlier programs. Rich had begun hosting the program on WFUV New York, from Fordham University, New York's Jesuit College, in 1973 and he broadcast well over 2200 shows. This is a sad loss and we are going to miss him.

TV highlights - UK

Crosby items seen since our last issue was prepared were:

Andy Williams – My Favourite Duets	Sky Arts
Discovering: Bing Crosby	Sky Arts
Discovering: Grace Kelly	Sky Arts
High Society	My5
Holiday Inn (multiple showings)	Sky Christmas
Stagecoach	Film4
Talking Comedy	BBC2
The Country Girl	Sky Oscars
The Legendary Bing Crosby	Sky Arts
White Christmas (multiple showings)	Sky Christmas

Talking Comedy was shown on December 9 and it featured Bob Hope being interviewed on various BBC programmes over the years. In the 30-minute time span, Bing cropped up on several occasions and we saw an excerpt from *Picture Parade* in 1962 when the boys were promoting *The Road to Hong Kong*. Extensive use was made of Bob's appearance on the Parkinson show in December 1975 when he talked about Bing and an extract from the Madison Square Garden opening in 1968 was shown with Bing refereeing a pseudo "fight" between Bob and Rocky Marciano. Bing had recorded a special greeting to Bob for that Parkinson show using an amusing parody of "The Pleasure of Your Company" and it was good to see this rare item.

Gogglebox is a British reality show that has aired on Channel 4 since 7 March 2013. The show features a number of families and groups of friends from around England and Wales, who react to British television shows from their own homes. On the December 18 edition, the various viewers were watching *White Christmas* and it was really heart-warming to hear all the nice comments about the film and Bing.

"Discovering: Grace Kelly" included clips of Bing and Grace in *The Country Girl* and *High Society* with Bing singing "True Love" being heard on the soundtrack as well.

The popular BBC soap *EastEnders* used "Mele Kalikimaka" in the soundtrack of its December 8 episode and "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" on December 13.

Top of the Pops on BBC4 on December 30 looked at the December 23, 1982 edition and included the Bing 'n' Bowie duet. The same duet was seen in *Bowie at the BBC* shown on BBC4 on January 15.

Homes under the Hammer on BBC1 on January 5 used Bing's "We're in the Money" and the BBC Parliament channel employed "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive" in its programme on January 19. The *Antiques Road Trip* on BBC1 used "Three Little Words" by the Rhythm Boys on January 20. Amazing how Bing pops up all over the place!

UK radio

The National Presenters

We noted the retirement of **Desmond Carrington** in our last issue and sadly he died on February 1st at the age of 90 following a long battle with cancer. He was a faithful supporter of Bing throughout his career and, as with Rich Conaty, he will leave a void which probably won't be filled.

Songs played on the BBC national networks of which we were aware over the last four months were:

BBC Music Jazz: Now You Has Jazz (Nov. 12) - Pennies from Heaven (Nov. 12)

Clare Teal: Someday Sweetheart (Nov. 6) – How About You (with Rosie) (Nov. 13) – Gone Fishin' (Dec. 4) – My Blue Heaven (Dec. 11) – Here Comes Santa Claus (Dec. 18) Little Jack Frost Get Lost (Jan. 1) – Fancy Meeting You Here (Feb. 19)

After playing "Little Jack Frost" on January 1, Clare heaped much praise on Bing, saying things like 'I can't get enough of him right now'...he was my constant companion throughout Christmas...his bottom register goes right through me'. Both Jason Liddiard and your Editor wrote to Clare to thank her for her nice words.

Elaine Paige on Sunday: Razzle Dazzle (Nov. 13) – You're a Sweet Little Headache (Jan. 15) – Well Did You Evah! (Jan. 29)

Ken Bruce: White Christmas (Dec. 23)

Don Black: White Christmas (Dec. 18) – Lazy Bones (Jan. 15) – Road to Morocco (Jan. 29)

Christmas Suzi Q: O, Come All Ye Faithful (Dec. 25)

After Midnight with Janice Long: Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 7)

Paul O'Grady: Small Fry (Nov. 6) - Peace on Earth

/ Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 25)

Huey Morgan: Let's Start the New Year Right (Dec. 31)

Anneka Rice: Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 3) – Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (Dec. 31)

Bradley Walsh: Swinging on a Star (Dec. 27)

Liza Tarbuck: Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (Jan. 28)

The Chris Evans Breakfast Show: Mele Kalikimaka (Nov. 25) – White Christmas (Dec. 15) – Style (Jan. 11) – Gone Fishin' (Feb. 23)

The Radio2 Arts Show with Jonathan Ross: Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah (Dec, 8)

Vanessa Feltz: Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (Nov. 1) – Pennies from Heaven (Nov. 22 & Dec. 2) Mele Kalikimaka (Dec. 16) – True Love (Dec. 26) – Start the Day Right (Jan. 4)

Johnnie Walker's Sounds of the 70s: Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 18) – White Christmas (Dec. 18)

Steve Wright in the Afternoon: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (Dec. 19) – White Christmas (Dec. 21)

Steve Wright's Sunday Love Songs: White Christmas (Dec. 11) - White Christmas (Dec. 18)

Pick of the Pops: Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 17)

Bob Harris Country: Mele Kalikimaka (Dec. 22)

Moon River and Me (A tribute to Andy Williams the man and his music): Swinging on a Star (Jan 1)

The Sunday Hour: I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day (Dec. 25) - Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Jan. 1)

Radio 1's Superstar Playlist with Alessia Cara: (Radio 1) – White Christmas (Dec. 25)

The World's 100 Best Selling Artists: White Christmas (Dec. 27) - Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 27)

The Listening Service (Radio 3): I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day (Dec. 25)

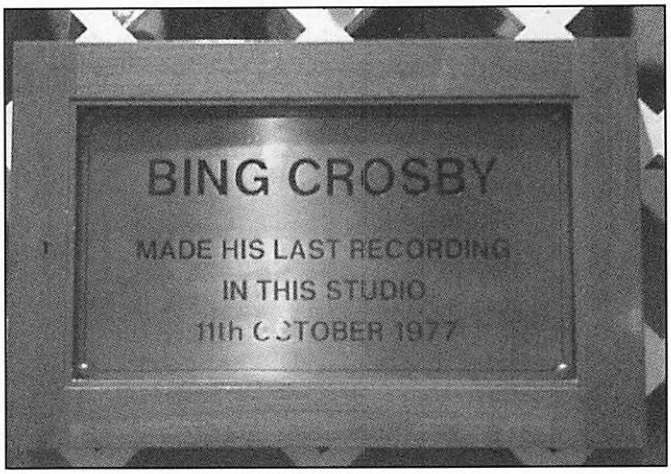
Desert Island Discs: (BBC Radio4) (Actress June Brown was the castaway) Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (Feb. 17)

Chris Hawkins (BBC Radio6): Mele Kalikimaka (Dec. 19) - Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 23)

Cerys on 6 (BBC Radio6): Mele Kalikimaka (Dec. 25)

Jarvis Cocker's Sunday Service (BBC Radio6) - The Spaniard That Blighted My Life (Jan. 15)

Jeremy Rose heard an interesting item in January and he writes: "A nice "Bing" moment on BBC Radio 4's long-running "Brain of Britain" quiz today. One of the questions was, "What was Bing Crosby's real first name?" Luckily, someone got it right, and the quiz-master (our old friend Russell Davies) related the "Bingville Bugle" reason for "Bing", before going on to say that they were recording the show in the same BBC Maida Vale studio where Bing had recorded his final session, and referred to the plaque commemorating the fact on the wall above the control-room."



"I remember many years ago I was working in the main studio at Maida Vale and during the tea-break I took myself off on a little pilgrimage into the bowels of the building to seek out the smaller studio where Bing's final sessions had taken place to take a photograph of the plaque. Nice to know that it's still there."

The local radio presenters

Your editor was on BBC Radio Nottingham on December 19 on the morning show hosted by Andy Whittaker and Sarah Julian. It was an item about William Brewster, one of the Pilgrim Fathers who sailed on the Mayflower to the USA in 1620 and how the song "White Christmas" would not have happened without him. Brewster was born in Nottinghamshire and it had been suggested that Bing was directly descended from him. In fact Bing was descended from a Simon Crosby, another Puritan who followed Brewster to the States a few years later. A far later descendant of Simon Crosby did however marry a descendant of Brewster so there was a link, albeit not direct. I gave some information about the song and how Bing came to sing it. Several clips from the 1947 version were used as part of the item.

Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria (and on the Internet at www.bbc.co.uk/radiocumbria) is a huge Crosby supporter and has again used plenty of Der Bingle's songs in response to requests made on her Saturday night shows (10pm-midnight). In the 4-month period covered by this issue and despite missing a show because of illness, Anne played no less than 31 songs by Mr. Crosby including rarer items such as "My Own True Love", "At Last, At Last", "The Preacher" and "Gigi".

Anne continues to welcome requests by email to *anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk* so email her if you want to keep hearing Bing on the radio. She plays at least one for me every month. There's a "Listen again" facility for up to 28 days after the initial broadcast.

Bill Rennells ***Harmony Night*** show on BBC local

radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet always has plenty of Crosby thanks to the efforts of ICC members. It's a three-hour broadcast starting at 10 p.m. on Sunday evenings and Bill also has a "Listen Again" option. He is now helped by Al Ryan who seems very knowledgeable about Bing and has a sizeable Crosby collection. Al knows George O'Reilly well.

In the 4-month period, Bill played 22 Crosby tracks, six of which were requested by Stan White with Ian Lawrence and your editor weighing in regularly too. In other words, Bing would only have been heard eight times in four months if we hadn't sent in our requests. A wide selection was heard varying from "My Own True Love" through the Christmas songs to "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime".

Please join in and email Bill with your Bing requests to *bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk* so that we keep Bing's name to the fore in the South East of England.

Gerald Jackson has been a broadcaster for nearly 50 years and currently he has two programmes on local radio. The first is "Unforgettable" on Radio Lancashire on Sunday afternoons at 4 p.m. and the other is the similarly named "Gerald Jackson: Unforgettable" on Radio Manchester on Sunday nights at 10pm. Each show runs for two hours and has a completely different play list. Gerald plays Bing very frequently on his shows and during the 4-month period now under review, he played 22 songs including tracks such as "Bless 'Em All", "Trade Winds", "Dearly Beloved" as well as the usual Christmas offerings.

I have emailed Mr. Jackson to thank him for playing so many Crosby tracks in recent months on his programmes and he duly mentioned my email on his January 22 show.

The Late Paul Barnes, the two-hour show hosted by Paul Barnes over seven BBC local radio stations and on the Internet starting at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights has a regularly monthly segment featuring the 2013 Crosby calendar (the last one we issued). He plays the calendar song each time and usually adds another Crosby song or two on each occasion. Paul omitted the November calendar because of having to rejig his programme after the death of Kay Starr and later he missed two shows due to a severe throat / chess infection. He made up for it though and I was interested to hear him play "Living One Day at a Time" on November 26. Barnsy broadcast a tribute to Buddy Bregman in January and used Bing's 'Deed I Do" as part of this. Also it was very pleasing to hear the whole of the Flop Parade Medley with Ethel Merman in February.

BBC Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** has a programme of big band swing and balladeers which goes out each Sunday afternoon and Bing is featured regularly. In all Howard used 17 Bing songs in the 4-month period. Both Stan White and your Editor prompted Howard each month and my attempt to get him to play "In the Gloaming" from the "Here's Bing Crosby" CD the ICC had provided for him collapsed into chaos. Howard had asked his researcher to find the song and she came up with "The Pleasure of Your Company" as this has a brief insert of "Roamin' in the Gloamin'". It seems that Howard takes the CDs we provide home and the researcher was not aware of the CD.

Wherever you are in the world, please email Howard with a Crosby request at *howard.leader@bbc.co.uk.* There is a "Listen Again" option.

As usual, I've had a look at the BBC website to see what other Crosby songs have been played in the last four months. Although not all the presenters use the site, the following have been shown as being played on the local BBC radio stations. Most of these shows have a "listen again" facility. Why not drop a line to your local radio station and ask for a Bing record to be played? It only takes a minute or two to fire off an email. Also, please thank the presenters for playing Bing.

Beverley Humphreys presents *Beverley's World of Music*: (BBC Radio Wales) – It's Been a Long, Long Time (Dec. 4) – Swinging on a Star (Dec. 25) – Happy Holiday (Dec. 25) – Twelve Days of Christmas (Jan. 1) – Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep (Jan.8) – True Love (Jan. 15) – Love Walked In (Jan. 22) – New San Antonio Rose (Jan. 29)
Caryl Parry Jones: (BBC Radio Wales) – White Christmas (with Bryn Terfel) (Dec. 1)
Chris Needs: (BBC Radio Wales) – Ain't Misbehavin' (Nov. 1) – White Christmas (Dec. 24) -
David Allen: (BBC Radio Surrey) – You're All I Want for Christmas (Dec. 17) – Snow (Dec. 24) – Let's Start the New Year Right (Dec. 31) – Count Your Blessings (Feb. 18)
Sean Coyle: (Radio Foyle) - Isle of Innisfree (Feb. 17)
Graham Pass: (BBC Wiltshire) – Nice Work If You Can Get It (Dec. 4)
The Jazz House: (Radio Scotland) – Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (Dec. 21)
Jumoke Fashola: (Radio London) – Takes Two to Tango (with Rosemary Clooney) (Dec. 28)
Money for Nothing: (Radio Wales) – White Christmas (Dec. 3) – Pennies from Heaven (Dec. 24)
The Music Match: (Radio Scotland) – Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 9)
Neil Foster: (BBC Radio York) – True Love (Nov. 27) – White Christmas (Dec. 18) – Snow (Dec. 18) – Well Did You Evah? (Jan. 15)
James Hazell: (BBC Radio Suffolk) – Don't Fence Me In (Jan. 19) – As Times Goes By (Feb. 16)
Radio Cymru Mwy – White Christmas (Dec. 15)
Richard Green's Vintage Chart Show: (Radio Devon) – Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep (Jan. 29)
Roy Noble: (BBC Radio Wales) – Cuanto La Gusto (Feb. 12)

Sunday Club with John Bennett: (Radio Ulster) – Moonlight Becomes You (Nov. 20) – Well Did You Evah! (Nov. 27)
Tommo: (BBC Radio Wales) – White Christmas (with Bryn Terfel) (Dec. 5)
Unforgettable with Bob Roberts: (Radio Solent) – In a Little Spanish Town (Dec. 4) – Sleigh Ride (Dec. 18) – A Crosby Christmas (Dec. 25) – Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? (Jan. 8) – Don't Fence Me In (Jan. 15) – Sam's Song (Feb. 5)

Angel Radio station in Havant, Hampshire (www.angelradio.co.uk) has continued to broadcast a Bing radio show on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m.

Australia

Each Monday morning from 9 to 11 (Australian Eastern Time) Graham Pascoe presents 'Morning Music' on community radio station 2MCE-FM, located in Bathurst, New South Wales (about 130 miles west of Sydney) on the campus of Charles Sturt University. Mostly he plays recordings of popular music from the 1930s, 40s and 50s, many of which were originally featured in stage or movie musicals. Needless to say, he usually plays a couple of Crosby recordings. The station broadcasts on 92.3 FM in Bathurst and its programs are streamed (but not archived) on www.2mce.org.

John Funnell's "I've Heard That Song Before" from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. every Wednesday on WNY FM 88.9 features Hollywood and Broadway favourites. It includes Bing every week and the show can be heard online at www.wynfm.org.au/. Previous shows can be accessed too.

The Golden Days community radio station on 95.7 FM in Victoria continues to have a half-hour programme at 3.00 p.m. on Wednesday afternoons which broadcasts a Bing Crosby tribute each week. This is presented by Carol Farman.

Other radio programmes featuring our man are Peter O'Brien's "Music Showcase" on Eastern FM 98.1 (Mondays 12 noon to 2 p.m.) Loris Young's show on 3WBC FM 94.1 (Tuesdays 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.) has plenty of Crosby too.

YouTube

Anton Garcia-Fernandez, our American co-editor, regularly does a podcast about jazz that is available on YouTube, Podomatic, and iTunes (for free download). The podcast is simply a conversation with someone about a specific topic, which he records and then makes available for free on these Internet platforms. It's called The Jazz Flashes Podcast, and on December 30 he involved me in an episode about Bing as a jazz singer.

Should you be snowbound or otherwise trapped in the house, feel free to listen to it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_48gsQ87Hw or on i-tunes. We certainly cover a lot of ground talking about Bing during the 94 minute session.

Malcolm Macfarlane **macwilmslo@aol.com**

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Debbie Reynolds, a leading lady in Hollywood musicals and comedies including *Singin' in the Rain*, passed away on December 28, hours after being rushed to the Cedars-Sinai hospital in Los Angeles after suffering a stroke. She was 84. Her daughter Carrie Fisher had died the previous day.

She was born Mary Frances Reynolds on April 1, 1932, in El Paso, Texas, to Ray and Maxine Reynolds. After her father got a job as a carpenter for the railroad in the late 1930s, the family built a house in Burbank near Warner Bros.

Growing up, Reynolds was a natural mimic, often performing for classmates at John Burroughs High School. She had planned to be a gym teacher but at 16 won the Miss Burbank beauty contest doing an imitation of her idol Betty Hutton performing. Reynolds had entered for the free blouse and scarf promised each entrant.

The contest judges — studio talent scouts — were so impressed with her naturalness that they flipped a coin to see who got to interview Reynolds first. Warner Bros. won, and she rode her bike to the screen test.

Soon, she was under contract for $65 a week and was given a new first name by the studio chief who deemed "Mary Frances" too old-fashioned.

"I didn't want to be called Debbie, but that's the name Jack Warner gave me," she later said.

The studio did not seem to know how to use Reynolds — she mainly wandered the lot and took dance and drama lessons. When MGM, home of the movie musical, expressed interest 18 months into her contract, Warner Bros. gave her up. She remained an MGM contract player for about a decade.

She was just 18 when she was cast in *Singin' in the Rain* despite her lack of experience as a dancer. Decades later, Reynolds said she could still recall the pain from three months of dance rehearsals that made her feet bleed.

"*Singin' in the Rain* and childbirth were the hardest things I ever had to do in my life," Reynolds wrote in her 1988 autobiography.

The movie about Hollywood's transition to talkies was a box-office hit, and her portrayal of an up-and-coming spunky actress turned Reynolds into a star. It is widely considered one of the great movie musicals.

From 1950 to 1967, she appeared in more than 30 movie musicals and light comedies, plus notably *How*

the West Was Won and she received her lone Oscar nomination for playing the title character in 1964's *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. Many critics considered it her most memorable early role, and it was a favorite — Reynolds related to a woman with tremendous zest for life.

Debbie also had several hit records to her name, and topped the charts with the 1957 song "Tammy" from the film *Tammy and the Bachelor*.

Off-screen, she starred in the real-life role of the wronged woman in a love triangle that many in the late 1950s considered at the time the Hollywood scandal of the century. Her first husband, pop singer Eddie Fisher, left Reynolds — perceived by moviegoers as the girl next door — for sultry actress Elizabeth Taylor.

The outpouring of public sympathy for Reynolds only served to increase her fame — the comedy *The Mating Game* that she co-starred in with Tony Randall was one of four movies she appeared in the next year.

It was around this time that she starred with Bing and Robert Wagner in *Say One for Me* and she wrote about the experience in her autobiography.

> My breakup with Eddie (Fisher) turned out to be a boon to MGM. Suddenly all the other studios wanted me, which meant MGM just had to decide who to lend me out to and how much to charge. Somehow my salary didn't increase much. But I didn't mind as long as I was working.
>
> Before I met Eddie, I was deeply in love with Robert Wagner, and making this movie so soon after my marriage dissolved was a real heartache for me. RJ had moved on and so had I, but being around him reminded me of my fantasy life. Well, RJ wasn't interested, so get over it, Debbie. RJ had to dance in the movie and worked hard to get his positions right. Mostly I kept to myself, though I still have a crush on RJ to this day. There is no one more terrific.
>
> Bing Crosby was a very big star when we made this film, as well as one of the most successful recording artists of all time. His version of "White Christmas" was the biggest-selling single of that era. Bing liked to record at six in the morning when his voice was low. He wouldn't even warm up.
>
> Bing was then married to Kathy Crosby, his second wife, an actress and singer who performed under the name of Kathryn Grant. They gave parties where I met people like the great baseball manager Leo Durocher, whom I wouldn't otherwise have expected to meet.
>
> ...I once overheard Bing on the phone, when we were making *Say One for Me*, telling the person at the other end to "go ahead and fire him, but don't let him know it came from me." I think he was talking about our director; I'm not sure to this day. Bing was tough, but he could also be generous.
>
> (Debbie Reynolds, *Unsinkable – a Memoir*, page 239)

Debbie joins in as Bing sings "The Secret of Christmas".

Graham Pascoe writing on Crosby Fan World pointed out that the duet version with Debbie of "Say One for Me" on the Coronet label was one of the last of Bing's singles to reach the charts in Australia in August 1959

Debbie and Bing worked together again in 1963, recording "Something Sort of Grandish" for the Reprise Repertory Series and she was one of many stars attending Bing's Pasadena concert in March 1977. She was also instrumental in persuading him to accept an award from The Thalians in 1976 as she described in her book.

> Many years later, my charity, The Thalians, planned to honor Bing, Bob Hope, and Dorothy Lamour, who had starred together in the seven popular "Road" movies. Everyone told me that I'd have trouble getting Bing to come to accept his award. Bob Hope teased me that I would never get him to agree to it. So I decided to call Bing. In those days you could go direct to anyone, even the biggest stars. You didn't have to go through their agent or manager or hairdresser like you do now—if you can even get them on the line.
>
> I was then appearing on Broadway in *Irene*, and Bing was on vacation in Scotland, playing golf. Just as I was going on onstage, I got word that he was on the line. Long-distance phone calls weren't as easy to place then as they are now, so of course I took the call. They held the curtain until I finished. When I asked Bing to be our honoree, he agreed, but only if he could accept the award before dinner. He didn't want to wait around all night to receive it. I agreed to his simple request.
>
> (Debbie Reynolds, *Unsinkable – A Memoir*, page 239)

As the lighthearted films she was known for went out of style in the late 1960s in favor of message movies, Reynolds turned to the stage. She earned a Tony Award

nomination for playing the title role in a Broadway revival of *Irene* in the early 1970s, then began a nightclub act that she would perform for decades.

Work was a necessity for the thrice-divorced Debbie, whose public image was far rosier than her private life.

Ms. Reynolds' second and third husbands left her in financial ruin, she often said. Husband No. 2, Harry Karl, was a shoe magnate who lost his millions and hers through gambling and bad investments, according to her autobiography. He left her with her two children and his three to raise when they divorced in 1973 after 14 years of marriage. It took her 10 years to pay off Karl's debts, "and I've never forgiven him for that," Reynolds told *The Times* in 1997. He died in 1985.

In 1997, the Las Vegas hotel and casino she opened in the early '90s went belly up and she filed for bankruptcy. Reynolds blamed her third husband, real estate developer Richard Hamlett, for mismanaging the property. They had divorced in 1996 after more than a decade together.

Contemporary TV audiences knew her from her recurring Emmy-nominated role as Grace's eccentric actress mother on the NBC show "Will & Grace." She also gained notice in the late 1990s for her supporting role as Kevin Kline's mother in the satirical film *In & Out*. Her last role was as Liberace's mother in the 2013 HBO movie *Behind the Candelabra*. She received the 2014 Screen Actors Guild life achievement award.

When MGM decided to liquidate its storage room of costumes, props and furniture in 1970, Reynolds tried to buy it for $5 million but the studio decided to auction it piece by piece.

Beginning with the auction — "when my hand never went down," she often said — she built a 4,000-piece collection. Her strategy was to buy whole sets from Oscar-winning films and costumes worn by actors she was certain would go down in history.

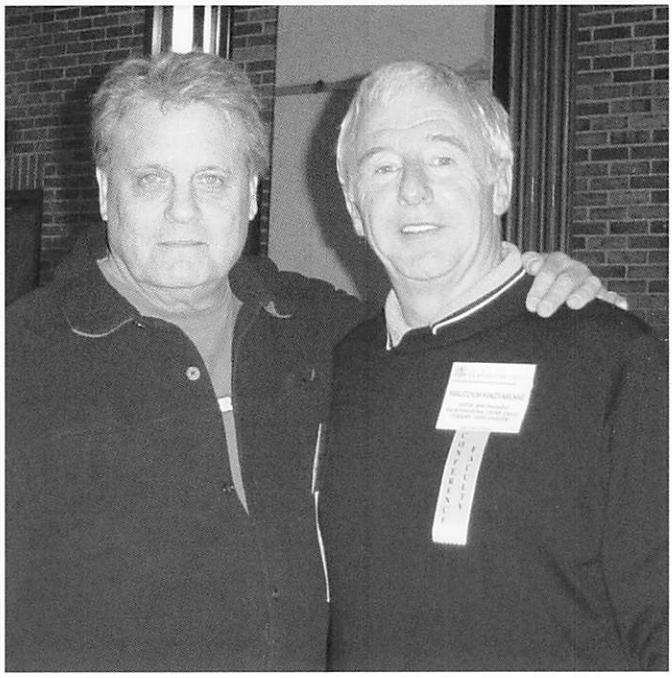
"I felt I knew what a fan wanted to see," Reynolds told *The Times* in 2011. "They wanted to touch costumes."

While she had displayed some pieces in a museum at her Las Vegas hotel, she gave up on her longtime dream of opening a museum dedicated to Hollywood memorabilia and auctioned many of her treasures in 2011. They brought in more than $25 million.

Monroe's white dress that billowed in *The Seven Year Itch* went for $4.6 million, Judy Garland's blue gingham dress from *The Wizard of Oz* drew more than $1 million and a guitar played by Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music* sold for $140,000.

Buddy Bregman, the conductor, arranger and composer died at the age of 86 on January 8. A nephew of songwriter Jule Styne, he is known to all Crosby fans through the "Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings" album (which Jeremy Rose has reviewed earlier in this issue) and also as the producer of the 1967 TV programme *A Little Bit of Irish*.

Starting out as conductor and arranger for the West Coast vocal group 'Cheers' which had a hit with "(Bazoom) I Need Your Lovin'" in 1954, he went on to be the A & R head of Verve Records where he arranged and conducted the excellent Ella Fitzgerald albums "The Cole Porter Songbook" and "The Rodgers & Hart Songbook". For a long stretch starting in the mid-1950s, Buddy was one of the busiest music men in Hollywood, with his work covering records, television and movies such as *The Pajama Game* (1957), *Five Guns West* (1955), *The Wild Party* (1956), *The Delicate Delinquent* (1957) and *Born Reckless* (1958). He was the first American director hired by the BBC, where he produced and directed 1965's *An Evening with Ethel Merman* and he also ran its specials department. In 1966, he was appointed head of light entertainment for the weekday ITV company Rediffusion, London.



Buddy Bregman and your Editor locked in an embrace at Hofstra!

Buddy played a prominent part in the Crosby Centennial celebrations at Hofstra and Gonzaga and your Editor had many conversations with him. He had been friendly with the sons of Bing's first marriage as a youth and he attended the recording session when Bing and Al Jolson waxed "Alexander's Ragtime Band". Buddy also worked with Gary Crosby and apparently Bing asked him to keep an eye on Gary and to tell him if anything untoward happened.

During his presentations, Buddy talked about the album he made with Mr. Crosby which involved two hours at Bing's home around the piano, plus the two recording sessions. He said that Bing was a little reluctant to become involved to start with as he thought that Buddy's accompaniment might not suit his style

("too jazzy") but after Bing negotiated a particularly favourable contract (10% of the gross without deduction for recording costs), he participated enthusiastically. The 12 tracks were completed in just two three-hour sessions which both finished early. The sessions started at 9 a.m. and Buddy laughed as he recalled the state of the musicians falling into the studio at that time of the morning, most of them not having been to bed!

Buddy made a point of saying that Bing was very caring about his sons from his first marriage. He said that the negative comment about Bing as a parent was hogwash and in fact Buddy would have liked to have had Bing as a father. He then said quite sincerely that Bing was the finest man he had ever known in his life!

Kay Starr, the self-described hillbilly singer who crisscrossed jazz, country, pop, blues and rock 'n' roll in the 1950s with hits like "Wheel of Fortune" and "Rock and Roll Waltz," died on November 3 last year at the age of 94. She was born Katherine Laverne Starks on July 21, 1922, in Dougherty, Okla., to an Irish-American mother and an Iroquois father. (She also claimed Cherokee and Choctaw heritage on both sides of her family.)

Her singing career began in childhood. After she moved to Dallas with her family, she began singing to the chickens in the backyard, catching the ear of an aunt, who entered her in a local radio talent contest. Kay became a local radio sensation at age 7 and eventually had her own 15-minute show twice a week, earning $3 a performance.

She changed her last name to Starr because, she said, too many fans misheard it that way.

When she was 15, her family moved to Memphis, where she was chosen to sing with Joe Venuti's orchestra during an extended engagement at the Peabody Hotel. Her parents agreed but insisted that she be home by midnight.

Ms. Starr moved to Los Angeles after high school and sang with the trumpeter Wingy Manone's band, then with the saxophonist Charlie Barnet's. While performing for World War II soldiers one night, she fainted in the wings and was hospitalized for pneumonia. Many, including Kay herself, felt the infection lightened her voice.

She took a year off to recuperate, and when she resumed her career her voice had returned to its old, huskier self. After going solo in 1946, she signed with the newly formed Capitol Records the next year.

For a while she was overshadowed by two more successful female singers on Capitol, Margaret Whiting and Peggy Lee. That changed when Kay had a breakthrough hit with "You Were Only Fooling (While I Was Falling in Love)" in 1948, followed by two songs tinged with country and folk, "Oh, Babe!" and "Hoop-Dee-Doo." These hits brought her to the attention of Bing and she first guested on his Philco show on November 17, 1948. She made three more appearances on the Philco show, two on the Chesterfield show in 1952 and then twice on Bing's GE show in 1953. In addition Bing invited to her sing at the Victory dinner following his Pro-Am golf tournament in January 1949.

Her big break came with her recording of the country song "Bonaparte's Retreat," shortly after Pee Wee King's instrumental version became a Top 10 country hit in 1950. Her rendition sold a million copies, and her crossover into country music continued when she recorded four duets with Tennessee Ernie Ford.

The hits continued: "Come On-a My House" (which had already been a hit for Rosemary Clooney) reached No. 8 on the pop chart in 1952, and that same year she released what is probably her best-known song, "Wheel of Fortune," which was No. 1 for 10 weeks. The next year brought another hit, "Side by Side," which went to No. 3.

Ms. Starr signed with RCA Victor in 1955 and recorded "Rock and Roll Waltz" ("A-one, two, and then rock, / A-one, two, and then roll ..."), which became a huge hit in the early years of rock 'n' roll, spending six weeks at No. 1.

She played Las Vegas and Atlantic City and toured the country off and on from the 1960s through to the 1990s. In the 1980s she was part of the touring show "4 Girls 4" (sometimes known as "3 Girls 3"), whose often-changing cast variously included Ms. Clooney, Helen O'Connell, Ms. Whiting, Rose Marie and Kaye Ballard. Ms. Starr stayed intermittently active, and her fans stayed loyal, into the 21st century: She recorded "Blue and Sentimental", a duet with Tony Bennett on his 2001 album "Playin' with My Friends: Bennett Sings the Blues."

Kay Starr had six husbands (she rarely talked about them in interviews), including, briefly in 1953, the bandleader and composer Vic Schoen.

Florence Henderson, who went from Broadway star to become one of America's most beloved television moms in "The Brady Bunch," died on November 24 at the age of 82. Henderson was a 19-year-old drama student in New York when she landed a one-line role in the play "Wish You Were Here."

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II were so impressed they made her the female lead in a 1952 road tour of "Oklahoma!" When the show returned to Broadway for a revival in 1954, she continued in the role and won rave reviews. She went on to play Maria in a road production of "The Sound of Music," was Nellie Forbush in a revival of "South Pacific" and was back on Broadway with Jose Ferrer in "The Girl Who Came to Supper" in 1963. She made her movie debut in 1970 in *Song of Norway*, based on the 1944 operetta with music by Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg,

It was on April 20, 1968 that Florence appeared on the Hollywood Palace Show with Bing, singing a "Strings" medley with him as well as a solo herself.

Singing with Bing on the Hollywood Palace show.

Premiering in 1969, "The Brady Bunch" was among the first shows to introduce to television the blended family. As its theme song reminded viewers each week, Henderson's Carol was a single mother raising three daughters when she met her TV husband, Robert Reed's Mike Brady, a single father who was raising three boys.

The eight of them became "The Brady Bunch," with a quirky housekeeper, played by Ann B. Davis, thrown into the mix.

On the surface, "The Brady Bunch" with Henderson as its ever-cheerful matriarch Carol Brady resembled just another TV sitcom about a family living in suburban America and getting into a different wacky situation each week. But well after it ended its initial run in 1974, the show resonated with audiences, and it returned to television in various forms again and again, including "The Brady Bunch Hour" in 1977, "The Brady Brides" in 1981 and "The Bradys" in 1990. It was also seen endlessly in reruns.

As her TV career blossomed with "The Brady Bunch," Henderson also began to make frequent TV guest appearances. She was the first woman to host "The Tonight Show" for the vacationing Johnny Carson. After "The Brady Bunch" ended its first run, Henderson alternated her appearances in revivals of the show with guest appearances on other programs, including "Hart to Hart," "Fantasy Island" and "The Love Boat."

Henderson married theater executive Ira Bernstein and the couple had four children before the union ended in divorce after 29 years. Her second husband, John Kappas, died in 2002.

Miguel Ferrer, the actor and son of Rosemary Clooney and Jose Ferrer, died on January 19 at the age of 61. He had been suffering from throat cancer. His early forays into show business were as a studio musician and he was on drums when his mother appeared with Bing at the Palladium in 1976. The Ferrer children and Bing's second family were close. He became an actor in the early 1980s and soon was very busy. Looking like a younger version of his father, he scored a signature role as FBI Agent Albert Rosenfield in 1990 on David Lynch's smash TV series *Twin Peaks*. Apart from TV, Ferrer appeared in more than 40 movies, including *RoboCop* (1987), where he played the villainous Bob Morton, *Traffic* (2000), *Iron Man 3* (2013), where he portrayed the vice president. In recent years, he played the chief medical examiner and gruff-but-supportive boss to series star Jill Hennessy for the six seasons of *Crossing Jordan*. He has played assistant director Owen Granger on *NCIS: Los Angeles* since 2012.

Joan Carroll, a former child star who appeared in *Meet Me in St. Louis* opposite Judy Garland and *The Bells of St. Mary's* with Bing, died on November 16. She was 85. Born Joan Marie Felt in Elizabeth, N.J., on January 18, 1931, Carroll and her family went to California in 1936 when she was 5. She made her film debut in *One Mile from Heaven* (1937) opposite Claire Trevor and later appeared in *Mr. Moto's Last Warning* (1939), Basil Rathbone's *Tower of London* (1939), *Anne of Windy Poplars* (1940) and *Tomorrow, the World!* (1944). She played Garland's younger sister Agnes, who pulls a dangerous prank with the youngest sister, Tootie (Margaret O'Brien), in *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944).

Father O'Malley gives Patsy some advice.

Her connection with Bing came when she portrayed the struggling eighth-grade parish student Patsy who at first doesn't get any sympathy from Ingrid Bergman in *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945). This was her last film but she also played the part of Patsy in radio versions of the film with Bing in 1946 and 1947. She continued to live in Beverly Hills, married James Krack in 1951, had four

children and then moved with her family to Colorado.

Alice Ludes, the last survivor of The Music Maids vocal group who worked with Bing on radio and record for five years, died on February 12 at the good age of 104. Born in Tacoma, she graduated from high school in January 1931 and tried several jobs but she really wanted to sing. Her mother spotted an ad in the Tacoma newspaper for a duo called the Williams Sisters who wanted to become a trio. Alice auditioned and got the job, singing the middle harmonies and doing the arrangements. They got an agent and were booked across the state and eventually the whole country, including Chicago, New York, San Francisco and Hollywood. When they sang on a San Francisco radio program, Alice met a handsome young radio engineer named Edward Ludes who took a shine to her. In April, 1935, the Williams Sisters sang on Bing's Woodbury show in Hollywood.

Judy Schmid interviewed Alice for the spring 2007 edition (#145) of BING magazine and she told her what happened next.

"After Hollywood, we went on to Chicago and New York, but we weren't doing as well as we'd done previously. The sisters were unhappy not being stars, and I missed Ed. While in New York, we agreed to part ways, and I wired Ed to tell him I was coming to California. He'd just accepted a position in Hollywood with NBC and welcomed the opportunity to see me on a regular basis. He mentioned there was a group called The Music Maids who might be willing to take on an additional vocalist, and I moved back west."

Alice working with Bing on the Kraft Music Hall.

"After an audition, I was hired as the newest Music Maid and in 1939 we were hired to perform a musical number in *East Side of Heaven* with Bing. I was still star-struck, but I had the chance to remind Bing that as part of the Williams Sisters, I'd already performed with him on his radio show. He seemed pleased to be told – and started teasing me for being from Tacoma! Bing liked working with us and had his brother Everett draft a contract for us to join him on the Kraft Music Hall."

"The Music Maids remained on the Kraft show until 1944 and then more-or-less dissolved over the summer – Trudy Erwin with her solo career, others of us with our families and now our children – it was 'time' and we had terrific memories of those wonderful days working with Bing."

Alice's family became her main focus and she turned to oil painting and china painting as new hobbies. Always cheerful, creative and optimistic, Alice outlived her husband, Ed, by almost 30 years and she is survived by her three children, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Pat Friday, the singer, died in June last year at the age of 94. Hardly a household name but Pat Friday is a name that all devoted Glenn Miller fans will probably know. She was the singing voice of Lynn Bari who appeared in both the Glenn Miller films, *Sun Valley Serenade* (1941) and *Orchestra Wives* (1942). The link with Bing is that Mr. Crosby heard the 17-year old sing during an amateur night at the Victor Hugo cafe in Hollywood. She was performing there at the urging of her sorority sisters at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she was studying home economics. Bing was so impressed that he arranged to have her on his Kraft Music Hall show on May 25, 1939 where she sang "Begin the Beguine" and "Sing a Song of Sunbeams". She continued on the show through the summer of 1939 but then returned to college. Later she went on to other radio work and became a 'ghost singer' in films. Pat and Bing worked together on a *GI Journal* show on November 17, 1944 as well when she sang "Tojo Is Forced to Vacate".

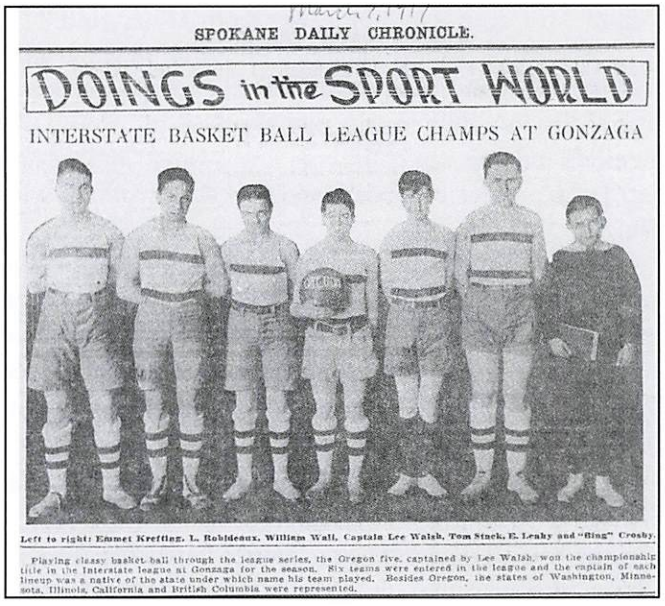
THE WAY WE WERE

The section of the magazine where we look at what Bing was doing in years gone by.

100 YEARS AGO

As 1917 opened, Bing's father returned to work after many months absence because of the impact of Prohibition. His employer Inland Brewery had changed its name to Inland Products and at first they manufactured near-beer and vinegar and soon they added pickles and other products as well. Father became secretary of the company.

Harry Crosby (aged 13) was still at Gonzaga High School and on March 7 the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* carried a photo of 'The Oregon Five' basketball team which had won the Interstate League at Gonzaga. Bing was pictured holding what appears to be a scorer's book and it is assumed that this was his role rather than being a player.



SPOKANE DAILY CHRONICLE.

DOINGS in the SPORT WORLD

INTERSTATE BASKET BALL LEAGUE CHAMPS AT GONZAGA

Left to right: Emmet Krefting, L. Robideaux, William Wall, Captain Lee Walsh, Tom Stack, E. Leahy and "Bing" Crosby.

Playing classy basket-ball through the league series, the Oregon five, captained by Lee Walsh, won the championship title in the Interstate league at Gonzaga for the season. Six teams were entered in the league and the captain of each lineup was a native of the state under which name his team played. Besides Oregon, the states of Washington, Minnesota, Illinois, California and British Columbia were represented.

Bing is on the far right.

On March 15, Bing took part in the Annual Elocution Contest at the school and recited "Old Watermelon Time" in the Junior Division.

On April 6, the United States entered the First World War. Larry Crosby applied for the officers' training camp at the Presidio, San Francisco, and left within the week.

75 YEARS AGO

1942 was going to be a very important year for Bing and it began with a Kraft Music Hall broadcast with Mary Martin taking over from Connie Boswell as resident female vocalist and she and Victor Borge became regulars. Guests in the next few weeks included Cesar Romero, Wingy Manone, Robert Young, Lucille Ball, Madeleine Carroll and John Garfield. In February, Bing went off on a golf tour to Arizona and Texas with Bob Hope to raise funds for the American Red Cross. Mickey Rooney deputized for him on the Kraft show for two weeks. Huge crowds watched Hope and Crosby in the golf matches. On their return to California, they began playing golf matches to raise funds for the war effort at weekends.

Starting on January 30, Bing held his last golf tournament at Rancho Santa Fe and about 250 pros and amateurs took part. *Don't Hook Now,* a thirty-two-minute short on golf, was filmed during the tournament and Bing is seen singing "Tomorrow's My Lucky Day" in this and many of the top golfers are also featured.

During February, press reports indicated that Bing had duly registered for conscription to the armed forces as had many other Hollywood stars.

> A consensus of biographers holds he was turned down by Henry L. Stimson, an influential figure in American politics. He had served in the cabinets of Presidents Taft, Theodore Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover and, in 1940, FDR asked him to come out of retirement to be Secretary of War. A formidable figure, Stimson was the classic "old curmudgeon," a hard-line lawyer who later would influence President Truman to use the atomic bomb. He was 75 and unimpressed by celebrities. Stimson apparently advised The Singer his enlistment would be chaotic and there were ways in which he might better serve. He suggested propaganda broadcasts to the Germans among whom Crosby enjoyed pre-war popularity.
>
> This version originally came from Cork O'Keefe who claimed he got it first hand from Crosby. According to O'Keefe, Crosby told him Stimson had been brusque to the point of warning if he tried to enlist, in any branch of service, Stimson would see he was found unfit.
> (Norman Wolfe, *Troubadour*, page 270)

Retuning to Hollywood on February 24, Bing began making *Road to Morocco* with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour and filming continued until April. He also resumed his KMH broadcasts. Guests included Paul Robeson, Jack Teagarden, Pat O'Brien, The Ink Spots, Robert Preston, Walter Huston, Spike Jones and His City Slickers, Larry Adler and Gene Tunney.

His recording activities in the four months to the end of April 1942 produced 23 songs, five of which charted in the same period. The most successful was "Deep in the Heart of Texas" which reached the No. 3 spot in the Billboard charts during a 9-week stay.

> Bing Crosby (Decca 4162) - "Deep in the Heart of Texas" Like a prairie fire, the clap-hands ritual for the Texas tune has made it catch on with a blaze. Now that Bing Crosby has added his vocal stamp, it looms even bigger on the waxes. However, Bing does not monopolize the side; he limits himself to two short choruses at the beginning and end. Bridging the vocals is some exciting jamming by Woody Herman and His Woodchoppers, with the biggest kicks rolling out of the trumpet's hot bell…There are big phono possibilities in "Deep in the Heart of Texas." The clap-hands ditty has already begun to catch on, and Crosby's entry is a cinch to corner much of the play.
> (*Billboard*, February 28, 1942)

50 YEARS AGO

Bing's main show-business work centred on the *Hollywood Palace* shows in the first few months of 1967 and it seems that he was paid $12,500 per show. The show seen on January 14 starred Jimmy Durante, Bob

Hope, and Edie Adams and *Variety* magazine liked it.

> 'The Hollywood Palace' may not match the venerable stature of the 'Ed Sullivan Show', but it has reached its fourth birthday. And in this day of 13-week cycles, 'second seasons' and maybe thirds, finishing three years and starting strong on the fourth on TV looms as quite an accomplishment. So last Saturday night (14th), the Hollywood Palace had a happy style birthday party with Bing Crosby, who did similar chores for the debut show in 1964, emceeing and performing with his customary or rather, legendary smoothness. He was surrounded by a solid roster of performers, including such veteran show biz comrades as Bob Hope, who dropped in from the other network to give his greetings, and Jimmy Durante, as bouncy as ever. (*Variety*, January 18, 1967)

On February 18, the *Hollywood Palace* show had Ella Fitzgerald, Alice Faye, and Phil Harris as guests whilst the April 1st show reunited Bing with Louis Armstrong. Other guests on that show were Red Buttons and Nanette Fabray.

With Alice Faye and Phil Harris at the Hollywood Palace.

Apart from the Hollywood Palace appearances, Bing was also seen in *A Little Bit of Irish* which had been recorded in Dublin, Ireland, in September 1966 and on *The Dean Martin Show.*

The Bing Crosby Pro-Am Golf Championship took place in January at Pebble Beach. The Spyglass Hill course replaced the Monterey Peninsula Country Club. Jack Nicklaus was the professional winner and picked up the top prize of $16,000. ABC televised the event in colour for the first time although a storm washed out play on the Saturday forcing the final round to be played on the Monday. Celebrities playing included Bob Hope, James Garner, Ray Bolger, Dean Martin, Howard Keel, John Raitt, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Ricky Nelson, Frankie Avalon, Robert Wagner, Gordon MacRae, Clint Eastwood and Robert Goulet.

Later that month, the *American Sportsman* program featuring Bing fishing at Cockermouth in England was shown and following this, Bing wrote to Priscilla Koernig, Vice President of Club Crosby.

> Thanks for your letter. Glad you liked the fishing film on American Sportsman. It was fun to do - in a beautiful countryside, with a lovely river and a nice old Scotsman to talk to about the fish, their habits and the stream.
>
> I didn't know I had a Hollywood Palace show coming up on February 11th; I'll have to watch it.
>
> I don't generally look at the Hollywood Palace shows that I'm on because up where we live, we don't get Channel 7 well at all, and I'd rather wait until later on when they send me a copy of the film and I can run it on the projection machine here at home.
>
> It's much better.
>
> Hope this finds you in good health and spirits.
>
> Always yours - Bing

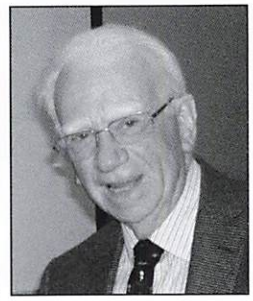
During February, Bing and Kathryn spent time at their Rising River ranch and on February 22, they were guests of Thomas Shevlin at the Bonnette Hunting and Fishing Club at Okeechobee, Florida Preserve. Their party shot thirty-two quail.

Bing, Kathryn and children spent Easter in Baja California, Mexico. Desi Arnaz had recently moved into the area and both families interacted frequently. Meanwhile Lindsay Crosby had a divorce suit filed against him by his second wife, Janet, alleging "grievous mental cruelty."

Lindsay and Janet at their 1965 wedding.

KEEPING TRACK

Richard Baker brings us up-to-date.



COMPACT DISCS

In the last issue of Bing I covered the cessation of supply of the Jonzo series "The Chronological Bing Crosby". There are still some new sealed copies listed on eBay both in the US and UK at $3:65 and £2:99, plus postage, though the range seems to be steadily reducing.

At the time of writing there is no news of any new issues from BingCrosby.com. Meantime there are some issues from other sources. Some items have Christmas themes but I'm afraid that information reached me too late for mention in the previous issue of BING.

Join Bing & Sing Along 2-CD Sepia 1309 USA around $21, UK £10.99

CD1

Tracks 1-12 50 songs in 12 medleys from **JOIN BING AND SING ALONG 101 GANG SONGS** LP1

Tracks 13-23 47 songs in 11 medleys from **JOIN BING AND SING ALONG 101 GANG SONGS** LP2

CD2

Track 1 4 songs in one medley from **JOIN BING AND SING ALONG 101 GANG SONGS** LP2

From **BING CROSBY ON THE HAPPY SIDE -**

Track 2. Singin' in the Rain/The Darktown Strutters' Ball 3. My Little Grass Shack in Kealakekua, Hawaii/Around Her Neck She Wore a Yellow Ribbon 4. Me and My Shadow 5. Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue/Marching Along Together 6. Should I? (Reveal Exactly How I Feel)/Blue Moon 7. Cecilia 8. Gimme a Little Kiss (Will Ya, Huh?)/When the Red, Red Robin 9. The Loveliest Night of the Year 10. Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree (with Anyone Else but Me)/My Pony Boy 11. The Man on the Flying Trapeze 12. A-Tisket, A-Tasket/Billy Boy 13. Forever and Ever

From **SING ALONG WITH BING** with children's chorus -

Track 14. A Bicycle Built for Two (Daisy Bell)/The Bowery/After the Ball 15. Long Long Ago/The Quilting Party (I Was Seeing Nellie Home 16. Polly Wolly Doodle/Shoo, Fly Don't Bother Me!/Oh, Dem Golden Slippers 17. Old Macdonald/Today Is Monday 18. On Top of Old Smokey/Down in the Valley/In the Good Old Summertime 19. This Old Man/Blow the Man Down/For He's s Jolly Good Fellow 20. Maryland, My Maryland/Love's Old Sweet Song/Goodnight Ladies 21. Little Annie Rooney/Did You Ever See a Lassie?/Oh How Lovely Is the Evening 22. She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain/Our Boys Will Shine Tonight/The Gospel Train's A-Comin' 23. I've Been Working on the Railroad/Where Has My Little Dog Gone?/Oh, Susanna

Bonus Tracks -

Track 24. The Music of Home 25. It's A Good Day 26. Aloha Means I Love You

Members will know that between 1959 and 1962 Bing recorded a number of LPs in the "Sing-Along" genre and I think it is important to define precisely what is covered here. The first LP was "Join Bing and Sing Along", with 33 songs, then there was "Join Bing and Sing Along 101 Gang Songs" on two discs, later followed by "On the Happy Side" and (not issued at the time) "On The Sentimental Side". The current issue covers all of the 24 medleys from "Join Bing and Sing Along 101 Gang Songs" and the twelve from "On the Happy Side". It does NOT cover the 33 songs of the first LP nor "On the Sentimental Side". So far as relatively recent issues on CD are concerned, the former was issued by Hallmark in 2011, the latter by Bing Crosby Enterprises/UMG and it remains available. The original three discs were on the Warner Bros. label, but there were issues on RCA with slightly varying titles and on Capitol with the misleading "Crosby Classics".

In addition to that original material, Bing's vocals for some of the medleys, less the original accompaniment, were taken and overlaid with a children's chorus for an issue which was made available through a number of youth organisations such as the YMCA and the Girl Scouts, the covers bearing the imprints of the appropriate organisation, but all bearing the title "Sing Along With Bing".

Some of the tracks from "Join Bing and Sing Along 101 Gang Songs" have previously appeared on CD, but not all together,

whilst "On the Happy Side" has only ever been available on CDs with very limited circulation and those from "Sing Along With Bing" never at all.

Opinions about the issue tend to be divided, some suggesting that Bing should not have been devoting his talents to such lightweight fare, but it is undeniable that on their own terms they are first class and were received enthusiastically on their release. Bing's vocals were laid over a pre–recorded chorus and instrumental accompaniment with him joining in on most of the songs, all in a light and breezy manner. It's really a happy and generally up-beat party sing-song with favourite Uncle Bing – who happens to have a very good voice – infectiously encouraging the others. It is happy party stuff and the original LP issues even had song sheets so that all could join in and enjoy, though perhaps the accompaniment is a little relentless. The vocals which were later overlaid with a children's chorus sound very different to those with the original backing so the apparent duplication is not really too obvious. I am tempted to wonder if the tapes of Bing's vocals alone still exist in the BCE vaults, and if so what might be made of them using new backings.

Finally as a bonus we have three out of four tracks that were recorded by Bing in January 1960. Inexplicably these were only issued in complete form on an Australian EP, though two also appeared elsewhere on a single. Judging from the difficulty in finding copies, the numbers pressed at the time must have been quite few. There have been no issues on CD and unfortunately there was no success in finding any good clean stereo copy, so the versions here are mono. With the exception of these three tracks the recordings are in very good quality stereo sound, and the insert gives full details of all the tracks, whilst Malcolm has contributed his usual informative notes. I am sure this issue will be welcomed by many. It fills several large gaps.

Bing Crosby – Milestones of a Legend 10 CD boxed set - The Intense Media 6000328

USA from $10-12, UK around £13

Tracks are from the albums named -

Disc: 1 1- 10. "High Society" 11-22. "Some Fine Old Chestnuts" (1957)

Disc: 2 1-12. "Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings" (1956) Bonus tracks - 13. Ciribiribin (They're So in Love) 14. Yodelin' Jive 15. Pistol Packin' Mama 16. Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby? 17. Don't Fence Me In

Disc: 3 1-12 "Songs I Wish I Had Sung the First Time Around" (1956) Bonus tracks - 13. Cabin in the Cotton 14. Mississippi Mud 15. Wa-Da-Da 16. T'Ain't So, Honey, T'Ain't So 17. My Suppressed Desire 18. Makin' Whoopee!

Disc: 4 1-12 "Bing with a Beat" (1957) Bonus tracks - 13. Hawaiian Paradise 14. South Sea Island Magic 15. Song of the Islands 16. Aloha Oe 17. The One Rose 18. On the Beach at Waikiki

Disc: 5 1-13 "Fancy Meeting You Here" (1958) Bonus tracks - 14. Fool Me Some More 15. It Must Be True 16. Them There Eyes 17. The Little Things in Life 18. I Surrender, Dear 19. Thanks to You

Disc: 6 1-11 "Bing & Satchmo" (1960) ("Up a Lazy River" missing) Bonus tracks - 12. After You've Gone 13. Livin' in the Sunlight, Lovin' in the Moonlight 14. You Brought a New Kind of Love to Me 15. Orange Blossom Time 16. St. Louis Blues 17. St. Louis Blues

Disc: 7 1- 26 "A Musical Autobiography" but see notes below. **Disc: 8** 1-25 "A Musical Autobiography" but see notes below.

Disc: 9 1- 10 "El Senor Bing" (1961) 11-21 "I Wish You a Merry Christmas" (1962) **Disc: 10** 1-12 "Holiday Inn"

A member emailed me with details of this issue which originates in Germany, just too late to include in the last issue of BING. He had some adverse comments to make and kindly supplied a fair number of sample tracks to illustrate his points. Initially, because it is a prime example of the "pile it high and sell it cheap" philosophy, I had no intention of mentioning it and I do agree with what he says. Then I realised that it does have a few redeeming features, mainly the fact that it is so cheap, but also the fact that it does fill gaps that might be currently difficult to cover. All the CDs are housed in card sleeves within a stout box. The covers are identical apart from track listings on the rear. There are no notes but a number of glaring errors in the track/personnel listings. Audio quality is variable but overall acceptable. On my samples the "High Society" tracks are mono apart from a stereo "Did You Evah", the "Bing with a Beat" tracks appear to be taken from an electronic stereo LP and the "El Senor Bing" and "I Wish You a Merry Christmas" tracks on CD9 are in mono. Apart from that, the tracks I have been able to sample – possibly about a quarter of the total, are not at all bad. I suspect that all are direct transfers from LP and there is little obvious evidence of digital manipulation. The "Musical Autobiography" sequence covers just the first four sides out of the original LP's ten. The "Bonus tracks" are drawn from all points between the late '20s to the mid '40s and so far as I can judge, are in good quality sound. The prices quoted by US sources vary widely.

High Tor

Footlight (https://www.footlight.com/) **Price: $18.95**

Footlight is now an internet store only (Address: P.O. Box 496, Georgetown, CT, 06829) and they are listing the soundtrack of the made for TV film from 1956 on what appears to be a recorded to order CD. It is exclusive to them. Julie Andrews, right at the start of her career, joins Bing in a fantasy fable, each singing a few songs connected by dialogue and narrative. I have no direct information about this issue apart from the abbreviated notice on the Footlight website, so cannot comment on quality or even state whether this is a complete copy of the original LP (which had a couple of tracks not in the TV film). The CD also contains Stephen Sondheim's "Evening Primrose".

A Christmas Story

Too late for mention last time around, I see that the record aimed at children "A Christmas Story" from 1957, with Bing narrating and singing has been reissued on BMG 538242982. Prices in US around $12, UK £8 plus. Whilst there has been a recent Japanese release, I believe it is some 14 years since versions have been more generally available.

What's 50 Years? - - - Between Crooners — Matthew Long & John Walton

Apple Berry Wine Media Production ABW-1001 Enquiries should be sent by email to John Walton at johnwaltonmusic7@gmail.com.
Price is £7 plus postage (which I understand is currently £1:50 in UK). Tracks can be sampled at: https://www.cdbaby.com/cd/matthewlong3

1. I Gotta Tell Ya*# 2. Skylark# 3. 'Deed I Do* 4. The Days of Wine and Roses# 5. You'll Never Know* 6. It's All in the Game* 7. That's Amore# 8. You're Just in Love (I Wonder Why)*# 9. You Do Something to Me* 10. Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah# 11. Song Sung Blue* 12. Yesterday When I Was Young# 13. Blue Skies# 14. Dear Hearts and Gentle People* 15. Moonlight Becomes You* 16. The Song Is You#

*= *Matthew Long* #= *John Walton*

No, nothing of Bing himself here, but two dedicated followers of Crosby singing in the style pioneered by him and generally paying homage to the great song writers of the "golden age" in the 'crooning' genre. I need hardly identify the titles associated with Bing. John has been singing and writing songs for many years, and has two CDs to his name whilst Matthew has been touring and broadcasting professionally since 2012. Both will be known to some of Bing's British fans, particularly those who have attended the Leeds gatherings. Whilst the title refers to their age difference, I doubt you'd realise it from this recording. Workload is evenly split on the solos with them duetting on two songs, including the counterpoint of "You're Just in Love". There is no overt imitation here, but some distinct echos of such luminaries as Frank S, Perry C and Dean M as well as Bing, and both performers are well grounded in the style and presentation of the era, whilst treating the songs in their own way. John makes the point that 'no one ever succeeded by being the 'second somebody-or-other'. - - - I've listened to and learned from many fine singers over the years and I suppose that, once their styles and approaches have been absorbed into the subconscious mind, they are there to be used, albeit subliminally'. "I Gotta Tell Ya", written by John is totally new, and it follows traditions that go back to Gallagher & Shean via Crosby & Hope, to name only the two most obvious. There is a good, predominantly rhythmic accompaniment. I liked it.

DVD and BLU-RAY

DVD

The Frank Sinatra Collection – Happy Holidays with Frank and Bing / Vintage Sinatra

Eagle Rock/UMG - Regions 1 or 2 US $8:49 UK £8:99

Released in time for Christmas 2016 (but not in time for this column) and containing the TV special of December 20th 1957 (more correctly named "Happy Holidays with Bing and Frank", in that order) in colour, we have Bing and one of the newer fellas together singing every other Christmas song you ever heard of in a 30 minute show. The remainder of the disc has an hour of numerous clips of Frank interspersed with anecdotes or narrative from members of his family. The Happy Holiday segment has been available before, both video and pure audio but with the names in the original and correct order. The current issue has good audio and video quality but the older B&W clips of Sinatra are less well defined, appropriate to their greater age.

Bob Hope - Hope for the Holidays

R2 Entertainment - Region 1 US around $9

Issued in 2004 and re-released last November. This is a retrospective with Bob looking back on highlights of Christmas shows. Most originate in "Bob Hope's Bag Full of Christmas Memories" from 1993 whilst there is also early material from the Colgate Comedy Hour from 1950. Of course we have some Bing Crosby, with numerous other stars.

The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson: The Vault Series

I asked for information about the disc or discs that included Bing. My grateful thanks to Girvan Paterson and Zane Johnson who have both responded with information. Volume 5 of the single disc series has three shows from March 1976, including the March 5th show with Bing, Ray Bolger and Marvin Hamlisch. In his introduction to Bing, Johnny states that it's the first time he's appeared on the show, though other information does show that Bing was present in October 1975. Possibly the explanation for this is that Johnny himself was absent on the earlier show and Don Rickles stood in for him. The shows are available by order over the internet from JohnnyCarson.com

The Marx Brothers TV Collection

Shout! Factory Region 1 USA around $28, UK £27

This three DVD set includes on disc 1 the very rare "Showdown at Ulcer Gulch" in which Bing, (with Bob Hope) has a brief cameo appearance.

Crosby in Search Of Crosby - Bing: The Truth Behind The Legend

Produced and presented by Chris Crosby (Bob Crosby's son). Available exclusively to subscribers to Amazon Prime for streaming. (Non-subscribers can have a free one month trial).

Just as we went to press, information was received about this 101-minute documentary, prepared by Chris Crosby, the son of Bob Crosby. You may remember that in December 2013 efforts were made to raise funds for this project and details were given in BING #166 (spring 2014).

This documentary has high ambitions. It is billed as –

"Learn the truth about Bing Crosby, the most popular musical and film personality of all time, from Anthony Quinn and Bob Hope to his own disgruntled eldest son. Story is narrated by his nephew, Chris Crosby, who spent a lifetime documenting testimony from those who loved and knew Bing best, featuring the one and only interview with his brother Bob Crosby. Journey inside a celebrity family."

It comes too late for me to be able to do more than view it on a single quick run through so my comments are initial reactions rather than considered opinion. However I find it extraordinarily skewed. There are many interviews with those who worked with Bing, but with exceptions (for example with Rich Little), they are drawn from the ranks of those who collaborated with him in the 1930s and 40s, marginally into the '50s, whilst the illustrative film clips are mostly very early and include several from the out-of-copyright Sennett "shorts" only indirectly relevant.

By far the longest interview is with Bob Crosby. Like the others it is spread throughout the film in short pieces, whilst Phil Harris and Bob Hope each get a good share. Other contributions come from many co-stars such as Donald O'Connor, Kitty Carlisle and Rhonda Fleming, with "outlier" members of the family - Arleen Crosby (Dennis's second wife) and Susan Crosby (Lindsay's third wife). It is rather obvious however that several notables, both professional collaborators and family, are absent.

There are references to the respect accorded by news media in not publicising meetings with various female stars in quiet corners of restaurants (presumably in the early/mid 1950s) whilst the spouses of two of Bing's sons have interesting observations to make on the relationship between Bing and his sons. However, whilst most contributors have sometimes amusing anecdotes which add detail to what we know, in the main they only confirm Bing's persona as a "Mr Nice Guy" who liked to keep his personal life to himself (who doesn't?), who was generous but concealed his generosity behind a mask, had some difficulty in devoting enough time to his sons and might have been over-strict. Gary's infamous book is covered and a comment is made along the lines that Gary had to say what he did to attract sales whilst Gary himself refuses to comment beyond saying that Bing was different once the front door was closed. Nothing is otherwise done either to detail or refute the claims. There are the inevitable references to early alcohol problems, and Dixie's later similar problems. Overall I'm not convinced about anything profoundly new.

What is extraordinary is what is not covered. I have already noted absences from the list of interviewees. There is mention of Bing's second marriage in 1957 with Rhonda Fleming speaking warmly of Kathryn, but you might conclude from this film that Bing's life was then a void until his death because there is only casual passing mention of his second family. Bob Crosby does say that he was taught not to make adverse comment about members of the family to outsiders but in the course of his interview ignores that lesson, whilst Bob Hope says he saw less of Bing once the family moved north (to San Francisco).

In some interviews, including that with Bob Crosby, the interviewer is Chris Crosby himself. From the appearance (and the very presence) of many of the interviewees much of the material must date from the 1980s and 1990s, and on viewing the trailer it has been suggested that some interviews might possibly be out-takes from a PBS documentary of 1987 "Remembering Bing".

Some time is spent on Bob Crosby and his family and we see Chris and Cathy Crosby (Bob's son and daughter) and Amber (granddaughter) performing, but this is all extraneous to the claimed content of the documentary, even if the contribution from Sammy Cahn about Bob being compared to Bing, illustrated by Bob performing with a dummy Bing and singing a song written by Sammy called "Comparisons" is quite amusing.

A trailer of about five minute is on YouTube for all to see.

BLU-RAY

Some of Bing's films have been appearing on Blu-ray in foreign language versions without necessarily having been released in original form. These include *High Society* (as "Alta Sociedad") and *Stagecoach* (as "La Diligence Vers L'Ouest"). They contain the original alongside whatever foreign language dubbing has taken place but I am perplexed about regional codings. The information I currently have to hand suggests that they are region B/2 but Amazon show their listing of High Society/Alta Sociedad as region free.

FremantleMedia, who have the rights to most of the post 1948 Bob Hope film catalogue, have announced the forthcoming release this summer of a number of Hope movies on Blu-ray. These include *Road to Rio* and *Road to Bali*. Fremantle released some Hope movies on DVD which were completely remastered high-definition transfers and it is reasonable to expect some good quality results.

COPYRIGHT

EU Directive 2011/77/EU has now come into force imposing a common copyright standard across the European Union. The practical effect is that protection has been extended from the 50 years hitherto observed by the UK and some other countries, to 70 years, and that recordings made since November 1963 will be covered for the more extended period. No more issues from the small "reissue" labels of material recorded after that date are likely (at least until 2033!). On my understanding of the directive, recordings made before that date are also brought within this protection if they were not also published before then.

AUDIO AND VIDEO FORMATS

In the UK vinyl sales topped three million last year, the highest UK total since 1991. This was a rise of 53% on the previous year. However vinyl only accounts for 2.6% of the overall music market. Meanwhile sales of CD sales dropped by 11.7% and downloads plummeted by 29.6% apparently as a result of a marked move in favour of online streaming. Such changes now occur very rapidly and it's not long since we were noting downloads increasing at the expense of CDs.

Not very long ago I pointed to the new wonder of 4K TV, which gives even finer definition than Blu-ray and I commented on the cost. There is very little yet on the market to feed through such screens, but prices have tumbled and I assume things will take off in the near future – just as the next generation - 8K - is about to hit the market!

Again I should like to thank the various correspondents who have been reporting on many matters.

Richard Baker bakerstonb@gmail.com

Feinstein, Pops salute top crooners at Kravis show

Our honorary member, Michael Feinstein, continues to promote Bing at every opportunity. On March 13, he was entertaining in West Palm Beach, Florida and S. Mark Aliapoulios reported on Michael's show for the *Palm Beach Daily News*.

Michael Feinstein passed the baton to Pops Associate Conductor Larry Blank Monday night at The Kravis Center as a capacity crowd saluted to *The Crooners: Bing, Frank and Sammy* as well as others whose careers helped bring the Great American Songbook to the world.

Five-time Grammy Award nominee Feinstein, who normally fronts the Kravis Pops, took the stage singing a smart arrangement of *The Birth of the Blues*, which electrified the audience. Feinstein has built his career over the last three decades championing the music, the musicians and the performers that have defined the Great American Songbook. The evening began with a look at the legacy of Bing Crosby, who, strangely enough, was strongly influenced by Al Jolson. Crosby had an intimate style making everyone feel that he was singing just for them. Feinstein captured that intimacy from the first notes.

Next, we heard the "signature song" of Dean Martin, whose performance persona was, in the words of Feinstein, "deceptively casual." He gave a stylish rendition of *You're Nobody, 'Til Somebody Loves You* in its original arrangement by Nelson Riddle.

The screen was lowered and Feinstein moved to the piano for a tribute to the great "balladeer" himself, Frank Sinatra. *Didn't We* was sung with heart and accompanied by black-and-white pictures of Sinatra from recording sessions, performances, movies and rehearsals. The audience really connected with this nostalgic moment. *Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby*, composed by Louis Jordan and one-time janitor Billy Austin, featured the achingly bluesy trumpet and sax sections.

Next came a shout out to one of the great voices of this era and South Florida resident Vic Damone with a theatrically lush arrangement of *Stranger in Paradise.* Sammy Davis Jr. was saluted with a frenzied rendition of *Come Back to Me* from the hit film *On a Clear Day,* featuring flashy solo work by the Pops' principal drummer.

Crosby is the name most widely associated with "crooning" and, appropriately enough, the first half ended with an extended medley of songs that he took to the top of the charts. The orchestra launched into *White Christmas*, and we heard everything from *Love is Just Around the Corner* to *Don't Fence Me In* and *Accentuate the Positive.* Nostalgic photos of Bing appeared as Feinstein created an intimate moment with *Count Your Blessings.*

The orchestra, which had been hot all evening, took the stage for the second half and exploded into the theme from the TV series, *Hawaii Five-O.* Feinstein joined them and moved seamlessly into the iconic classic, *More*, from *Mondo Cane.* More hits followed made famous by the likes of Andy Williams, Rosemary Clooney and Liza Minnelli including a sultry rendition of *Sway* and *Maybe This Time.*

One of the real treats of the evening was Feinstein tearing up the piano with Jerry Lee Lewis' *Great Balls of Fire.* Not exactly a piece for crooners but a great way to send this enthusiastic and appreciative audience out wanting more.

S. Mark Aliapoulios

Bing Crosby

April 22, 1977

Dear Priscilla:

Thanks for all the pictures. You certainly had a busy lens. Some of them are very good. Nice souvenirs for me to have - both of the concerts and of events at the Pebble Beach tournament.

The close-up is a very good shot indeed, and I'm returning it to you autographed.

Glad to hear that some of the British albums are starting to come out. I think the "Feels Good" album is the best I've done. In addition to the songs you mention, I like "The Night Is Young and You're So Beautiful". It has always been one of my favorite old songs.

The accident at Pasadena was a ridiculous affair. There should have been some protection. The stage was constructed so part of it went up and down to the basement to bring different bands up and performers.

The show had been finished, and I took my bows, thanked the audience, and turned to make exit stage right into the wings and stepped into space.

Bad as it is, I could have been killed quite easily. I'm recuperating now. It's going to take a couple of months before anyone knows whether or not an operation is going to be necessary.

The surgeons in charge seem to think I have a very good chance of eluding surgery. I hope they're right!

I think the March Club journal is a very good issue indeed.

Very best to you and all your associates -

Most sincerely,

Bing

Bing Crosby

BC:lm

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